

Careers education in New Zealand schools

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Executive summary

Aims, scope, and background

This report documents school-based careers education in relation to the aims of careers education “for individual students to develop self awareness, become aware of opportunities, make decisions and plans, take action (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 7) and the requirements outlined in National Administration Guideline (NAG) 1.6 which specifies that schools must:

provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students in year 7 and above, with a particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training (Ministry of Education, 2007).

We report on both principals’ and careers staff views of careers education through their responses to questionnaires. Our sample included all secondary and composite schools (including kura kaupapa Māori) except for 100 schools taking part in the new Creating Pathways and Building Lives (CPaBL) initiative.

For the purposes of this report, “careers staff” includes staff known as careers teachers, careers advisors, transition educators, work experience co-ordinators, Designing Careers co-ordinators, Gateway co-ordinators and STAR (Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource) co-ordinators. Our definition of careers education includes what is variously referred to as “careers guidance” and “career information, advice, and guidance (CIAG)”.

The overall aim of this research is to contribute insight that will guide and support decisions about the direction, focus, and resourcing of careers education in New Zealand schools. It stands alone as baseline information about how schools organise careers education, what careers staff think about their role and the purposes behind what they do, and the range of activities in which they engage students.

This research also forms part of the “Education Employment Linkages” (EEL) collaboration between NZCER, Lincoln University, and Victoria University of Wellington, funded from 2007–2010 by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. Education Employment Linkages aims to answer the question: How can formal support systems best help young New Zealanders to match education choices and employment outcomes to benefit themselves, their communities, and the national economy?

The backdrop for this report is a number of New Zealand research studies and evaluations which have found evidence that careers guidance delivery remains haphazard in some schools (Vaughan & Boyd, 2004; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007). For the teachers, there has been comparatively less careers-related professional development available than professional development for other aspects of teaching. For those who are careers practitioners, the role is perceived to be of lower status than other management roles (Vaughan & Kenneally, 2003). Furthermore, there is a general tendency for schools to privilege the provision of career information, often through marketing brochures, over guidance and careers development strategies and skills (Wilson & Young, 1998; Vaughan & Kenneally, 2003; Vaughan, 2005; Education Review Office, 2006). Other New Zealand research has found that these unresolved systemic issues can have a significant impact upon young people's ability to make successful transitions into tertiary study and training and/or employment (Vaughan & Boyd, 2005; Higgins & Nairn, 2006).

There is also evidence that some schools are working innovatively in relation to the requirements spelt out in NAG 1.6. Some schools are catering for at-risk students by combining programmes and sources of funding (such as STAR, Gateway, and Youth Training) to design transition programmes that support and “staircase” students from school into post-school training, study, and employment (Boyd, with McDowall, & Ferral, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2006). Some schools are thinking in future-focused ways about school qualifications and attempting to collaborate with industry and community in ways that help students link school with post-school careers (Hipkins, and Vaughan, with Beals, Ferral, & Gardiner, 2005).

An emergent emphasis on *career development* signals an end to the kind of vocationally-oriented forms of career planning and guidance with which schools have tended to favour working. This shift is precipitated—demanded—by the very different challenges faced, and expectations held, by individuals and contemporary society, including the end of one job for life, active management and “production” of career through self-as-portfolio, and the hybridisation of formerly different fields of work and study (Vaughan, Roberts, & Gardiner, 2006). This shift, encapsulated career *development* as encompassing “services assisting people at any age or point in their lives making choices about education, training, and occupation and managing their careers” (Third International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, 2006), suggests that NAG 1.6's “appropriate career education and guidance for all students” (NAG 1.6, Ministry of Education, 2007) needs an interpretation which emphasises the *processes* involved in the transition from school and choice(s) of career(s). Existing research, and a growing body of anecdotal evidence in New Zealand, strongly suggests we need to move things in this direction—something the new CPaBL initiative aims to address through its reorganisation of careers education into a school-wide endeavour.

Findings in brief

We found that careers staff as a group tend to be older, more likely to be female, and with more teaching experience, than their (noncareers) teaching counterparts. Few hold careers-specific qualifications, though most hold professional association membership. The majority work within a careers/transition team although, not surprisingly, this is less common in smaller or composite schools. The careers workforce also appears very stable. Most careers staff intend to remain in their current position and at their current school over the next five years (though we note that around a third of respondents gave no indication of their plans).

Generally, careers staff and principals expressed remarkably similar views about careers education. However, that they also saw little to disagree with in terms of the possible purposes and priorities of careers education, painted a very broad “everything and nothing” picture about the meaning of careers education. The one purpose that all careers staff (and nearly all principals) could agree with—*providing information, or access to it, for all students*—and the most easily measurable things such as course enrolments and job take-up, stood out from purposes and priorities requiring a more long-term or life-view of skills and capacities. Similarly, two of the three most popular sources of new ideas for careers education related to career and study programme information gathering and distribution. Only around half of careers staff *strongly agreed* with *helping students develop self-awareness* and only about a third *strongly agreed* with *teaching students decision-making strategies*—two aims spelt out in the *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* (Ministry of Education, 2003). That said, careers staff also expressed a strong interest in thinking about careers education through their use of conferences, workshops, professional development, and reading published research findings. Staff were also very clear that they faced new demands for their knowledge and skills, particularly when dealing with new pressures on students and students’ and parents’ (often differing) expectations.

Careers staff considered nearly all standard or well-known careers education activities to be *important* or *very important/vital* in their work. There was a trend for activities carried out with larger groups of students (or sometimes entire year levels) to occur regularly (*annually* or *1–2 times before students leave school*) compared with activities that focused on smaller groups of students with specific careers needs which tended to occur on a more ad hoc basis. The majority of careers staff indicated that their school did track students but there was variation over the groups of students that schools tracked and the tracking period length of time.

There was a close match between the importance and quality of relationships that careers staff had with various individuals and groups within their school, and with organisations and individuals outside the school. Generally they saw their most important and highest quality relationships as being in-school, with the exception of positive and important relationships with local tertiary representatives. Most schools had a standalone careers policy and reference to careers education in several other policies. Careers staff seemed well connected in terms of playing a key role in careers-related decision making, though a third of staff had management positions in the school

anyway. Principals and careers staff were more involved in careers funding decisions than boards of trustees or senior management, but interestingly also saw each other as the lead decision maker.

Careers staff were very clear that they enjoy what they do, despite dissatisfaction with aspects of their work and working conditions. The areas of most dissatisfaction, biggest (negative) change in workload, and the biggest barriers to providing careers education were related to lack of time. Careers staff were consistent in highlighting the difficulties in trying to work face-to-face or individually with students and manage the different parts of their workload, especially where these involved building and maintaining relationships. They perceived a lack of career progression in their role but recognised an availability of professional development opportunities and identified significant achievements related to their own upskilling. They reported significant achievements in relation to the most immediate post-school, measurable outcomes such as *students get jobs* and *students enter tertiary programmes*. Overwhelmingly, judgement of impact involved nondocumented personal experience, except in relation to formal programmes such as STAR and Gateway, where documentation was favoured.

Reading across and “above” all our data, we see that careers staff and principals are deeply committed to an idea of careers education and to meeting the needs of individual students and target groups of students. Although we suspect that *individual* careers staff can articulate what they think careers education is about, their views *as a collective* are noticeably indeterminate, particularly in relation to the immediate priorities of careers education.

Our analysis shows that careers staff are enormously committed to their jobs and very happy doing them. Like most teachers, they would probably say they became involved because they wanted to make a difference to the lives of young people. However, while careers staff highly value professional development (especially the practical and just-in-time), they do not appear to value qualifications (the theoretical grounding in what they do)—and perhaps with some reason, since careers education is one of many roles they perform in the school. We see that careers staff do not think their work has changed much in the past two years and do not see their own careers changing much in the next five, yet they also recognise that they face new challenges as the broad context of careers education, and associated policy demands, is changing around them.

Perhaps this is to be expected; careers education is a big concept encompassing much more than just school and jobs. If you understand “career” in its broadest sense, it does mean thinking about “life” and some of the other big ideas currently being explored in New Zealand that would seem to affect, well, everyone really: a knowledge society; a flexible and skilled workforce; achieving work/life balance; and practising lifelong learning. No wonder careers education seems to be about so much on the one hand and be so lacking in focus on the other.

We suggest a way forward is a re-examination of NAG 1.6 alongside the Ministry of Education’s (2003) publication *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools*: “self awareness, become aware of opportunities, make decisions and plans, take action”. In relation to these, careers staff are purposeful in the range of activities they undertake with individual students, target groups, and year level groups. However, many of these activities are built upon theories

about vocational guidance and models career related to age-and-stage that are passing their use-by date. NAG 1.6 refers to preparing for “the transition to the workplace *or* further education/training” (our emphasis) but it might do better to refer to preparing for “the workplace *and* further education/training”. In other words, careers education is not just about providing information about options and encouraging participation in tertiary learning or the workforce; it is about fostering individual progression and development (Watts, 2001) and crucially encouraging *participation as* learner-workers and engaging students with the “production” of their careers (Vaughan & Roberts, 2007).

We have seen the success of well-focused and well-supported initiatives like STAR and Gateway. Now we have the CPaBL initiative which aims to reorganise careers education into a workable school-wide approach. We still need to further understand and develop the focus but a school-wide approach is a great start. Without this focus and reorganisation we risk leaving teachers dealing with “school stuff” and careers staff at the margins, managing an ever-increasing deluge of information (and advertising) and different in-school and out-of-school relationships, while trying to help students link up life, the universe, and everything. The analysis in this report shows that we have a strong basis for building the careers education field within schools and there are clear indications for what the ongoing priority needs to be—an understanding of career *development* and career *management* in relation to career *guidance* and how these can work together to provide careers *education*.

1. Introduction

This report documents school-based careers education in relation to the requirements outlined in NAG 1.6 which specifies that schools must:

provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students in year 7 and above, with a particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training (Ministry of Education, 2007).

We report on both principals' and careers staff views of careers education from secondary and composite schools (including kura kaupapa Māori), and including schools of all authorities (state, state-integrated, and private or independent schools).

For the purposes of this report, “careers staff” includes staff known as careers teachers, careers advisors, transition educators, work experience co-ordinators, Designing Careers co-ordinators, Gateway co-ordinators and STAR (Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource) co-ordinators. By “careers education” we mean the activities that involve students in thinking about their immediate and long-term future beyond school, particularly their careers and roles as workers and learners and how these roles might integrate with their lives overall. Our definition of careers education includes what is variously referred to as “careers guidance” and “career information, advice, and guidance (CIAG)”.

Research aims

The overall aim of this research is to contribute insight that will guide and support decisions about the direction, focus, and resourcing of careers education in New Zealand schools.

This research also forms part of the “Education Employment Linkages” (EEL) collaboration between NZCER, Lincoln University, and Victoria University of Wellington, funded from 2007–2010 by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. Education Employment Linkages aims to answer the question: How can formal support systems best help young New Zealanders to match education choices and employment outcomes to benefit themselves, their communities, and the national economy? The research addresses this question through four different strands—School Communities, Regional Communities, Māori and Pasifika Communities, and Employer-Led Channels—each of which is headed by a different project leader at a different institution.

Each of the four strands in the EEL project has five different phases. The careers education questionnaire reported on here forms phase 2 of the NZCER-led School Communities strand,

making the Ministry of Education a co-funder of this part of the EEL research. The five phases in EEL are:

1. Cross-disciplinary international literature review on youth transitions.
2. Surveys to map what is happening currently within each strand. The careers education questionnaire in this report provides part of the “map” to inform phases 3 to 5.
3. Key informant research, which, in the case of the NZCER-led School Communities strand, involves semistructured interviews and focus groups with key school staff and students, and with key informants or organisations in the community such as parents, tertiary representatives, and industry.
4. Case studies focused on how things “work” in terms of successful education employment linkages.
5. A collaboration across all four strands to design and trial systems in sites where best practice is *not* currently taking place in order to test the new knowledge generated in the previous phases.

Background

Career development has become an international priority in support of workforce development and workforce preparation (Third International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, 2006). In New Zealand, careers guidance has been mandated for schools since 1996 and has been supported through the Careers Information and Guidance (CIG) grant, the Ministry of Education’s publication “*Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools*” and a range of Career Services resources and tools such as Plan-It books, CareerQuest, The Real Game, and Pathfinder online.

During 2005, Designing Careers was piloted in 75 schools in an attempt to improve the quality and number of opportunities for schools to develop careers information and guidance. Increases in support and resources have also gone into STAR and also to Gateway (funded by the Tertiary Education Commission), which continue to provide additional learning experiences and opportunities for young people making the transition from school.

More recently, school-based career guidance has received support through the Government’s 2006 Budget with funding for Creating Pathways and Building Lives (CPaBL), a new Ministry of Education-led initiative which began in 100 secondary schools in 2007. The hallmarks of CPaBL include a whole-school approach, clear expectations of student outcomes, and professional development support for schools through School Support Services and Career Services personnel. The purpose of CPaBL is to link careers education and other teaching/learning in the school. The Education Review Office has been engaged to evaluate the initiative and provide formative feedback while it runs throughout 2007 and 2008.

All of these initiatives proceed against a backdrop of wide variation in how schools actually provide careers education, and in the quality of that education. A number of New Zealand research studies and evaluations have found evidence that careers guidance delivery remains haphazard in some schools (Vaughan & Roberts, 2007). For the teachers, there has been comparatively less careers-related professional development available than professional development for other aspects of teaching. For those who are careers practitioners, the role is perceived to be of lower status than other management roles (Vaughan & Kenneally, 2003). Furthermore, there is a general tendency for schools to privilege the provision of career information, often through marketing brochures, over guidance and careers development strategies and skills (Education Review Office, 2006; Vaughan, 2005; Vaughan & Kenneally, 2003; Wilson & Young, 1998). Other New Zealand research has found that these unresolved systemic issues can have a significant impact upon young people's ability to make successful transitions into tertiary study and training and/or employment (Vaughan & Boyd, 2005; Vaughan et al., 2006).

There is also evidence that some schools are working innovatively in relation to the requirements spelt out in NAG 1.6. Some schools are catering for at-risk students by combining programmes and sources of funding (such as STAR, Gateway, and Youth Training) to design transition programmes that support and “staircase” students from school into post-school training, study, and employment (Boyd et al., 2006; Ministry of Education, 2006). Some schools are thinking in future-focused ways about school qualifications and attempting to collaborate with industry and community in ways that help students link school with post-school careers (Hipkins et al., 2005).

An emergent emphasis on *career development* signals an end to the kind of vocationally-oriented forms of career planning and guidance with which schools have tended to favour working. This shift is precipitated—demanded—by the very different challenges faced, and expectations held, by individuals and contemporary society, including the end of one job for life, active management and “production” of career through self-as-portfolio, and the hybridisation of formerly different fields of work and study (Vaughan et al., 2006). This shift, encapsulated *career development* as encompassing “services assisting people at any age or point in their lives making choices about education, training, and occupation and managing their careers” (Third International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, 2006), suggests that NAG 1.6's “appropriate career education and guidance for all students” (NAG 1.6, Ministry of Education, 2007) needs an interpretation which emphasises the *processes* involved in the transition from school and choice(s) of career(s). Existing research, and a growing body of anecdotal evidence in New Zealand, strongly suggests we need to move things in this direction—something the CPaBL initiative aims to address. This report provides a data-based analysis and yardstick of current school situations and issues, pointing towards sustainable future possibilities for school-based careers education.

Methodology

Questionnaire design

Two questionnaires were developed—a main one for school careers staff and a secondary one for school principals. Both questionnaires were developed by researchers and statistical data management staff at the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER). We also received advice from the Ministry of Education and Career Services. We piloted the questionnaire with careers staff at a number of schools of different sizes and different careers/transition team sizes and roles. Our pilot reviewers included staff with Careers and Transition Educators Association (CATE) membership and Career Practitioners Association of New Zealand (CPANZ) membership.

In the careers staff questionnaire, questions focused on the perceived purposes, priorities, and ideas for careers education, workload and job satisfaction, make-up of careers teams and roles, facilities, activities and target groups and year levels, judgement of impact, student tracking, key relationships, decision-making roles, school policy, funding decisions, changes in work, barriers, perceptions of the current careers climate, main achievements, and demographic information.

The second, shorter, and less detailed questionnaire for principals focused on careers education purposes and priorities, funding decisions, and perceptions of the careers education climate. Most of the principals' questions overlap with those from the careers staff questionnaire so that we could explore alignments and differences in perspectives between principals and careers staff. Some research has revealed the tensions that can exist between principals and careers educators in understandings of transition needs and careers-related roles and how they should be operationalised (Boyd, 2005; Vaughan & Kenneally, 2003).

We based several of the survey questions—on funding decisions, outcomes for target student groups, and career resources and activities—on the ones in the Education Review Office's CPaBL baseline survey to allow for comparisons to be made between schools that are, and are not, taking part in CPaBL.

We also based a number of questions on those developed for the NZCER National Survey of Secondary Schools. This allowed us to make a number of useful comparisons between the national survey and this careers education questionnaire.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their interest in being contacted to take part in the EEL project, receiving an emailed summary of this research, and entering a prize draw as a token of thanks for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

Sampling

Our sample comprised all secondary schools and composite schools (i.e., schools that have students of Year 9 level or over and receive a Careers Information Grant) that were also *not* taking

part in the CPaBL initiative. We left CPaBL schools out of the sample because they are already taking part in an evaluation of CPaBL over a two-year period and the respondent burden adding another, different questionnaire to that would have been too great. Our sample included schools that took part in the 2005 Designing Careers pilot, private as well as state schools, and kura kaupapa Māori.

Questionnaire response rates

There are a number of different ways to calculate response rates. We show the response rates most meaningful to our analysis and report in the table below. Each column shows the percentage of responses out of the total number of possible responses (n=247 and n=380). For example, the table shows that 56 percent of principals from a possible 247 secondary schools returned questionnaires.

Table 1 **Careers education questionnaire response rates by school**

	Secondary schools* (excluding CPaBL) (n=247) %	Secondary schools and composite schools** (excluding CPaBL) (n=380) %
Principal responses	56	49
Careers staff responses	53	44

* Secondary: Secondary Years 7–15, Years 9–15

** Composite : Composite, Kura Teina Composite

Since there is one principal at every school,¹ every questionnaire returned from a principal represents one school and this is a relatively straightforward response rate calculation.

However a careers staff response rate calculation is not so straightforward. We sent questionnaires to every individual member of any careers or transition team or department that we could identify. We attempted to identify them through CATE membership information and a calculation based on roll size (school roll 0–399 = one questionnaire sent, 400–899 = two questionnaires sent, and 900+ = three questionnaires sent).

From the responses, and telephone and email contacts from schools, we found that CATE membership and roll size do not *at all* correspond with the number of people in careers and transition roles in each school. Some large schools had only one or two careers/transition staff members. Some smaller schools had five or more careers/transition staff members.

However, as we included a section in the questionnaire on how many people (excluding those in solely administrative roles) were in a careers/transition role or team at the school, we do have data

¹ We recognise that in some circumstances at some school or kura, leadership is shared and works to a different model. However, in the case of this questionnaire, one principal at each school returned a questionnaire.

on the make-up of teams and roles for schools which returned questionnaires. This is reported in detail in the section on Careers staff and their roles.

The end result is that although we received a total of 201 responses from careers staff, only 33 were multiple responses from the same school. In other words, our 201 responses actually represent 168 different schools.

Therefore we calculated the response rate *by school* here because a calculated response rate *by careers staff* would entail knowing the total number of careers staff in schools—and nobody knows this. Therefore we cannot know the total staff (number of people) in careers roles that our questionnaire returns represent but we do know the total number of schools represented.

We show a further breakdown of the response rates by decile grouping, school size, school authority, location, and school type in the following table. Each column shows the percentage of returned surveys by different school characteristics, out of the total number of returned surveys (n=185 for principals and n=168 for careers staff).

The table enables an analysis of the representativeness of our returns through a comparison between the total sample (shown in the right-most column) and our returns (shown in the left and middle columns). For example, 15 percent of our total sample (all the schools sent questionnaires) were private schools and 8 percent of our returns from careers staff and principals were from private schools, so it shows that private schools are underrepresented. To give another example, 59 percent of the total sample (schools sent questionnaires) are schools in the decile 3–8 range; a similar proportion of our returns are also in this decile range, meaning that schools in this decile range are well represented in our returns.

Table 2 **School characteristics of questionnaire responses**

	Principal returns (n=185) %	Careers staff returns (n=168) %	NZ secondary and composite schools 06*** (excluding CPaBL) (n=380) %
Authority			
Private: Full registered	8	8	15
State: Integrated	20	23	19
State: Not integrated	73	69	66
Decile			
1–2	14	11	18
3–8	63	63	59
9–10	23	26	23
Location			
Rural	11	11	14
Urban	89	89	86
Size			
Up to 300	21	15	35
301–500	21	21	19
501–750	22	20	20
751–1250	23	25	18
1250+	14	18	8
Type			
Composite*	23	21	33
Secondary**	77	79	67

* Composite : Composite, Kura Teina Composite

** Secondary: Secondary Years 7–15, Years 9–15

*** National school statistics are based on Ministry of Education school information 2006

Reporting and analysis

Nearly all of the questions in both questionnaires were closed questions with boxes to tick or options from which to select answers. In these cases we also always provided an “other” option for respondents to add their own extra options. These options, and a final open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire, were categorised and coded. We calculated frequency data for all of this data. Where closed questions were left blank, the responses were recorded as “missing data” or “nonresponses” and this is usually reported, especially where the frequencies of these

responses were considered interesting or unusually high. Because some questions allowed multiple answers, or because figures have been rounded to whole numbers, totals in some tables (reported in percentages) may add up to more than 100 percent.

We also cross-tabulated all this data with a set of school characteristics data—size, location, socioeconomic decile rating, and school authority type (state or state-integrated). We also used cross-tabulations to link different questions with common characteristics or options. We used SAS for cross-tabulations, and tested all results for significance using chi-squares. Although comparison of proportions alone can seem to show differences, these differences may not be statistically significant once the size of the group is taken into account. In the report, the term “trend” refers to differences which were above the $p < 0.05$ level but were interesting and where a larger sample might have revealed them to be significant. We use the terms “significant” or “statistically significant” where differences occur at the $p < 0.05$ level. At the $p < 0.05$ level, a one-in-20 chance exists that a difference or relationship as large as that observed could have arisen arbitrarily in random samples. We stress that tests of significance do *not* imply causal relationships, simply statistical association.

We have used decile groupings 1–2, 3–8, and 9–10 in this analysis. In previous research, NZCER has found that real differences in student achievement and engagement, and in school-wide issues and pressures, are seen between low-decile (1 or 2), mid-decile (3 to 8), and high-decile (9 or 10) schools (e.g., Wylie & Hipkins, 2006).

We have grouped schools into size categories based on the number of students at each school. This allows us to compare very small schools with fewer than 300 students through to very large schools with more than 1250 students. The distribution of school size was used to determine these categories.

2. Careers staff and their roles

Overview

A major aim in this questionnaire was to get a sense of who careers staff were in terms of background, experience, and their different roles within the school. This section covers responses to questions we asked about teaching experience and length of involvement in careers since these are likely to be related to the way in which careers roles are organised within schools. The section also covers careers staff qualifications, professional association membership, careers or transition roles and job titles, and other positions held within schools.

Careers staff as a group tend to be older, more likely to be female, and with more teaching experience, than their (noncareers) teaching counterparts. Few hold careers-specific qualifications, though most hold professional association membership. The majority work within a careers/transition team although, not surprisingly, this is less common in smaller or composite schools. The careers workforce also appears very stable. Most careers staff intend to remain in their current position and at their current school over the next five years (though we note that around a third of respondents gave no indication of their plans).

Experience and qualifications

The majority of respondents had extensive teaching experience. Just over a third (34 percent) had taught for 16–25 years and a similar number (34 percent) indicated that they had been teaching for more than 26 years. Only 9 percent of participants reported they did not have any experience as teachers.

Careers staff tended to have had more teaching experience overall when their responses were compared with those gathered from teachers in the NZCER 2006 National Survey of Secondary Schools. Over two-thirds of careers staff in the careers education questionnaire (68 percent) had taught for 16 years or more compared to teachers responding to the national survey (54 percent). However, in a striking difference, only 19 percent of careers staff had taught for 15 or fewer years in contrast to 45 percent of teachers.

Despite their extensive teaching experience overall, nearly a third of careers staff (28 percent) had five years or less experience in careers education. Just over half (51 percent) had between six and

20 years of careers involvement. A very small group (8 percent) had extensive careers involvement with more than 21 years of experience.

Just 15 percent of respondents currently hold a careers-related qualification: Graduate Certificate in Career Development (9 percent), Graduate Diploma in Career Development (3 percent), Diploma in Counselling (3 percent). A further 6 percent are currently studying toward a careers-related qualification. Ten percent of careers staff indicated that they had noncareers-specific tertiary qualifications.

There was a high proportion (76 percent) of membership in a professional organisation. Three-quarters of respondents were members of the New Zealand Careers and Transition Educators Association (CATE). Not surprisingly, the low rate of professional careers qualifications held meant that few staff had membership of organisations which required formal qualifications: 17 percent belonged to the Careers Practitioners Association of New Zealand (CPANZ) and just 4 percent were members of *the New Zealand Association of Counsellors* (NZAC). Of those who belonged to an association, 19 percent indicated that they held membership of more than one organisation. Twenty-one percent of participants were not members of any careers- or counselling-related associations.

Given that larger schools tend to have careers *teams* and therefore more professional development opportunities than staff in sole charge positions at smaller schools, it is not surprising that staff from small schools (less than 300 students) were significantly less likely to have a membership to a professional organisation than those at larger schools. They were also significantly less likely to be members of CATE. Those who were members of CPANZ tended to come from larger schools although this trend was not statistically significant. However, there were a few teachers from smaller schools with membership to more than one association.

Background and personal career

There are some clear differences between the age and gender of careers staff responding to this questionnaire and teachers responding to the NZCER 2006 National Survey of Secondary Schools. The table below shows the comparison, highlighting an overrepresentation of older careers staff who also tend to be female. There were similar proportions of teachers and careers advisors/transition teachers in the 40–49 age bracket but there was a much lower proportion of careers staff aged 39 or under (11 percent compared to 30 percent from the national survey). There was also a higher proportion of careers teachers aged 50+ (63 percent compared to 42 percent). In addition, there was a higher proportion of females than males involved in careers education (78 percent) than reported in the national survey data (62 percent).

Table 3 **Age and gender distribution of survey responses**

	Careers staff responses (n=201) %	National survey 2006 (Secondary) teachers' responses (n=818) %
Age group (years)		
Under 39	11	30
40–49	24	27
50 or over	63	42
Gender		
Female	78	62
Male	21	38

Note: Only 3 percent of respondents to the teacher survey (2006 National Survey) indicated they were involved in careers or transition.

The table below shows a breakdown of respondents by ethnicity. The majority of careers staff identified as Pākehā/European. Medium- and High-decile schools had significantly more careers staff who identified as Pākehā/European than low-decile schools.

Table 4 **Ethnicity distribution of survey responses**

Ethnicity	Careers staff (n=201) %
Pākehā/European	89
Māori	9
Pacific	2
Asian	1
Other	4

* Percentages do not add to 100 as a result of multiple responses.

Plans for the next five years

In addition to collecting demographic data, we also gained an indication of respondents' career plans for the next five years. The overriding trend was for respondents to indicate they were unlikely to initiate or experience changes to the nature of their position within the next five years across the categories we provided. Only 14 percent of careers staff indicated that they were unlikely to *continue as I am now*.

We do note that around a third of careers staff gave no responses to these questions about plans. Given that an *unsure* option was available as a response, it seems that these non-responses may

indicate a difficulty in separating out plans related to the careers education role from plans involving the other (larger) roles played in the school.

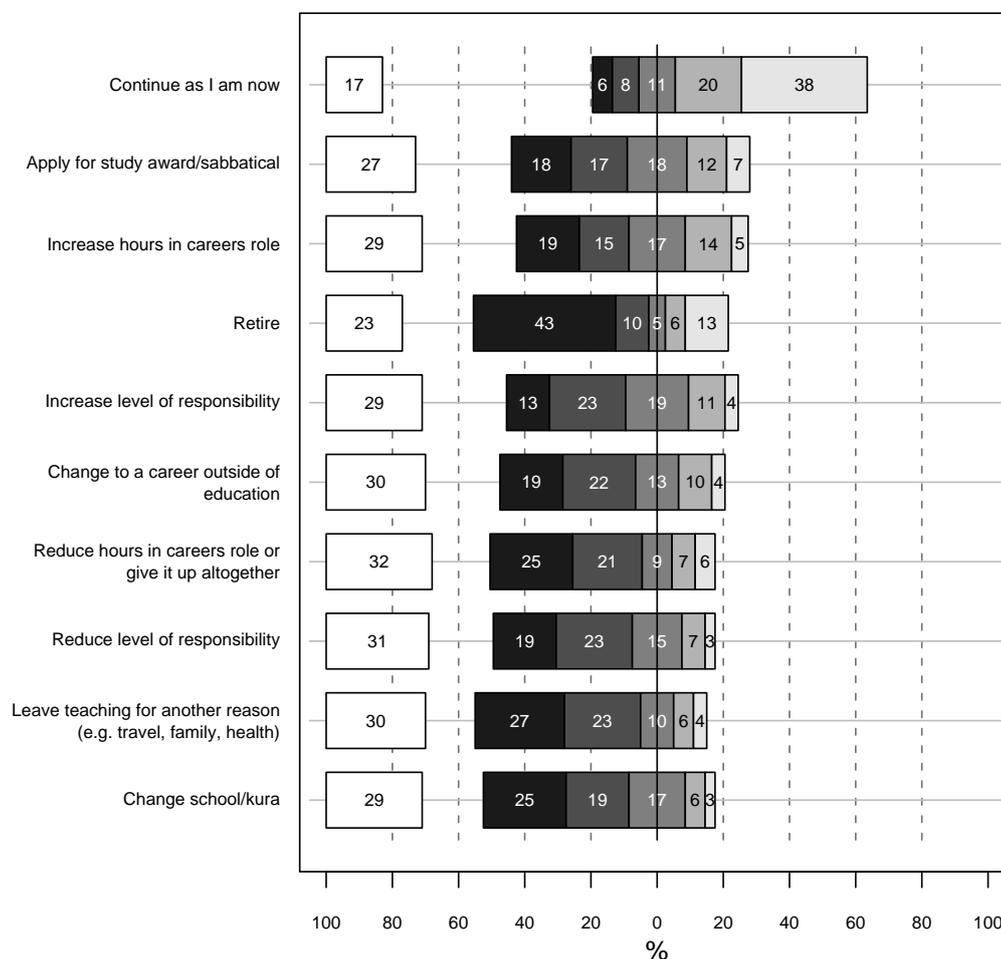
Of those who indicated a change to their role was likely, 19 percent were considering *applying for a study award or sabbatical*, 19 percent *increasing hours in their careers role*, 15 percent *increasing their level of responsibility*, and 10 percent *reducing their level of responsibility*.

Participants who indicated it was likely they would be leaving careers education most frequently selected *retirement* (19 percent), *changing to career outside of education* (14 percent), and *leaving teaching for another reason* (10 percent) as the reason. In addition, 13 percent noted they were likely to reduce or give up their careers role altogether, presumably to continue either in one of their other roles within the school or a new position. There is a likely link between respondent demographics, particularly age, and the proportion of careers teachers/advisors contemplating retirement.

Overall, there was a nonsignificant trend for there to be little change with the small proportion of careers staff who were reducing their role and/or leaving/retiring, matching those who were increasing their role or pursuing further training.

Figure 1 **Personal career plans**

Missing Very unlikely Unlikely Not sure Quite likely Most likely



Roles and positions

We asked participants to indicate whether they worked full- or part-time, and had a permanent or fixed term contract. Respondents were also able to advise if they held more than one position within the school. Further analysis gave us a picture of those who held multiple roles. The majority of respondents (78 percent) held a full-time position. Nineteen percent worked part-time. Most careers teachers were in permanent employment (93 percent) with 5 percent employed on fixed term contracts.

When asked to identify the role/s they held within the school, 83 percent of respondents selected *Careers advisor/transition teacher*, 48 percent *STAR co-ordinator*, and 48 percent subject teacher. Just over a third of participants were Gateway co-ordinators (35 percent), *faculty leaders/HODs* (36 percent), and 17 percent were deans. A smaller proportion of respondents were involved in school management, with 6 percent holding a *senior management* position and 6 percent being either an *assistant* or *deputy principal*. The majority of respondents held at least two roles within

the school with 42 percent having two to three and 38 percent holding four or more. Less than one-fifth of respondents (18 percent) held a single role. These are shown in the table below.

Table 5 **Professional role in the school**

Role	Identified by careers staff (n=201)	%
Careers advisor/transition teacher	166	83
Subject teacher	96	48
STAR co-ordinator	95	48
Faculty leader/HOD	72	36
Gateway co-ordinator	70	35
Dean	35	17
Guidance counsellor	16	8
Senior management	12	6
Assistant/deputy principal	11	6
Correspondence co-ordinator	4	2
Librarian	3	2
ACE co-ordinator	2	1
Career support staff	2	1
Other	12	6

* Responded totals greater than respondents as a result of multiple responses.

There are a number of statistically significant findings relating to staff roles. Careers staff in rural schools were significantly more likely to also be *subject teachers*. Careers advisors/transition teachers at smaller schools (less than 500 students) were significantly more likely to hold one or more of the following roles: *senior manager*, *dean*, and *STAR co-ordinator*. Lastly, careers staff in very large schools (1250+ students) were significantly less likely to be a *subject teacher* or a *Gateway co-ordinator*.²

We carried out further analysis on responses from the careers staff (80 percent) who indicated they had two or more roles within the school. We created categories grouping similar or comparable roles in order to uncover the most frequently occurring combinations of roles. The results are shown in the following table.

² There were also a significantly higher number of staff with a Gateway roles at low-decile schools than at medium- or high-decile schools. However, this is because eligibility for Gateway is restricted to low-decile schools (though more recently it has been extended to mid-decile schools).

Table 6 **Roles in school**

Roles	No. of responses (n=201)	%
Involved in all four areas ^a	46	23
Involved in three of the four areas	50	25
Careers advisor/transition teacher only	21	10
Careers advisor/transition teacher and subject teachers/other ^d	18	9
Career advisor/transition teacher and programme co-ordinators ^b	19	9
Career advisor/transition teacher and management ^c	14	7
Programme co-ordinators only	14	7
Involved in two of the four areas (noncareers advisor role)	9	5
Other only	7	4
Nonresponses	3	1

^a Four areas: career advisors/transition teachers; programme co-ordinators; management and subject teachers/others

^b Programme co-ordinators: guidance counsellors; STAR co-ordinators; and Gateway co-ordinators

^c Management: principal, assistant/deputy principal, senior managers, faculty leaders/HODs, and dean

^d Other: all others including any roles that are involved in careers education in a school-wide context

The most common combinations of roles were for respondents who indicated they held two or more positions within the school. The two most commonly reported combinations were:

- Twenty-three percent of respondents had four roles: one of each of the four main areas.
- Twenty-five percent of respondents had three roles: one role from three of the four main areas.

The combinations that revealed only careers-focused combinations were:

- Ten percent of respondents were careers advisor/transition teachers only.
- Nine percent of respondents were careers advisor/transition teachers and programme co-ordinators.

We can see that nearly half the careers staff (48 percent) hold three or four roles within the school across the four main areas/categories. While two of these groups (*careers advisor/transition teachers* and *programme co-ordinators*) relate directly to careers education, the others reflect participation and/or responsibility in other areas of the school. In addition, only 19 percent of respondents held careers-related roles exclusively within the school. With barely a fifth of careers staff focusing solely on careers, we can see that in many instances the provision of careers education within schools is shared among staff who also hold a myriad other roles and responsibilities.

Teams or going solo?

Nearly a third of respondents worked with another person (32 percent), with almost half (49 percent) indicating they worked in a team of three or more people. Just under a fifth (19 percent) had sole responsibility for careers education. There was a statistically significant trend for schools with rolls of 500 students upwards to have three or more people involved in the careers team. In addition, there was a clear trend that secondary schools (compared to composite schools) were more likely to have three or more people in their careers team. We can see that in the majority of instances (81 percent), careers staff were working in pairs and/or team situations. This provides an indication that, while careers-related roles were distributed, there was a level of overall co-ordination in careers education provision.

We asked respondents to indicate whether there was a team leader, in the event they worked as part of a careers team. Over half (60 percent) identified themselves as the team leader. A further 23 percent indicated that they were part of a team but did not lead it. Only 14 percent advised that there was no team leader, however these responses may reflect instances where there was no careers team, where careers staff worked in pairs and/or in shared leadership roles, or where there was a large careers team with no formalised leadership. Schools of 500 students plus are more likely to have three or more team members and were statistically significantly more likely to have a team leader. This is unsurprising given the patterns identified in participants' responses to whether these schools had a careers team. The latter situations—co-ordinating and organising careers education in large schools, together with the careers and noncareers responsibilities of team members—seem likely to require more formal leadership.

Where there was a careers team within a school, we sought to discover whether there was a relationship between the roles careers staff held and the careers team leadership position/s. We separated leadership responses from participants who advised they held one or more of the four designated management roles (principal, acting principal/deputy principal, dean, HOD) from those who held other roles (subject teacher, STAR and/or Gateway co-ordinator, etc.). The result appears to show a link between careers staff having both a management role/s (as we defined them for the purposes of analysis)³ and a leadership position within the careers teams. In other words, most of the careers staff (73 percent) responding to the questionnaire held leadership roles, in either the careers team or other school departments or groups (i.e., 48 percent had formal management role/s and another 25 percent did not have formal management role/s but were the careers team leader).

In total, almost half (96, 48 percent) of respondents held at least one of the four management roles, and the other half (105, 51 percent) held other roles within the school.

³ In keeping with more formal management definitions operating in schools, we have not defined the positions of STAR co-ordinator and Gateway co-ordinator as management positions. However, we acknowledge that these positions do involve management responsibilities and in some schools they may be formally regarded as management positions.

Of the 96 who held a management role, nearly three-quarters (73 percent) were team leaders. Six percent of participants indicated there was no careers team at the school.

Of the 105 who did not hold a management role, nearly half (49 percent) were team leaders. Eight percent of participants indicated there was no careers team at the school.

3. Careers staff and principal perspectives on careers education

Overview

A key part of our questionnaire has been its focus on the perspectives of those involved in delivering careers education. Rather than focus solely on what careers staff or schools report doing (e.g., various careers activities, uses of funding or careers material), our questionnaire has been shaped by a focus on how those involved in careers education *think about* what they do. In taking this approach, and in beginning this report with sections on roles and perspectives, we set the scene for the rest of the report: to understand the shape and scope of school-based careers education through an understanding of the backgrounds, perceived barriers, importance, and achievements of the people delivering it.

In this section we report on careers staff perspectives through their responses to questions about the purposes of, and sources of ideas for, careers education, and sense of the broad climate in which it functions. We also report on principals' perspectives through their responses to questions about important features of careers education and sense of the broad climate in which it functions.

Generally careers staff and principals expressed remarkably similar views about careers education. However, that they also saw little to disagree with in terms of the possible purposes and priorities of careers education, painted a very broad “everything and nothing” picture about the meaning of careers education.

The one purpose that all careers staff (and nearly all principals) could agree with—*providing information, or access to it, for all students*—and the most easily measurable things such as course enrolments and job take-up, stood out from purposes and priorities requiring a more long-term or life-view of skills and capacities. Similarly, two of the three most popular sources of new ideas for careers education related to career and study programme information gathering and distribution. That said, careers staff also expressed a strong interest in thinking about careers education through their use of conferences, workshops, professional development, and reading published research findings.

The purposes of careers education in the school

We opened our questionnaires to careers staff and principals by asking them what they thought were *the purposes of careers education in their school*. We provided respondents with a range of statements covering possible purposes for school-based careers education and a scale to indicate a level of agreement or disagreement (we also provided space for respondents to add any other purposes they thought relevant but almost nobody did). Neither NZCER nor we personally endorsed any of the purposes in particular; they were drawn from research on careers and experiences interacting with careers staff. We simply wanted to look for patterns of agreement or disagreement across many different possible purposes, and to have a broad context of reasoning through which to read or understand responses to other questions in the questionnaire.

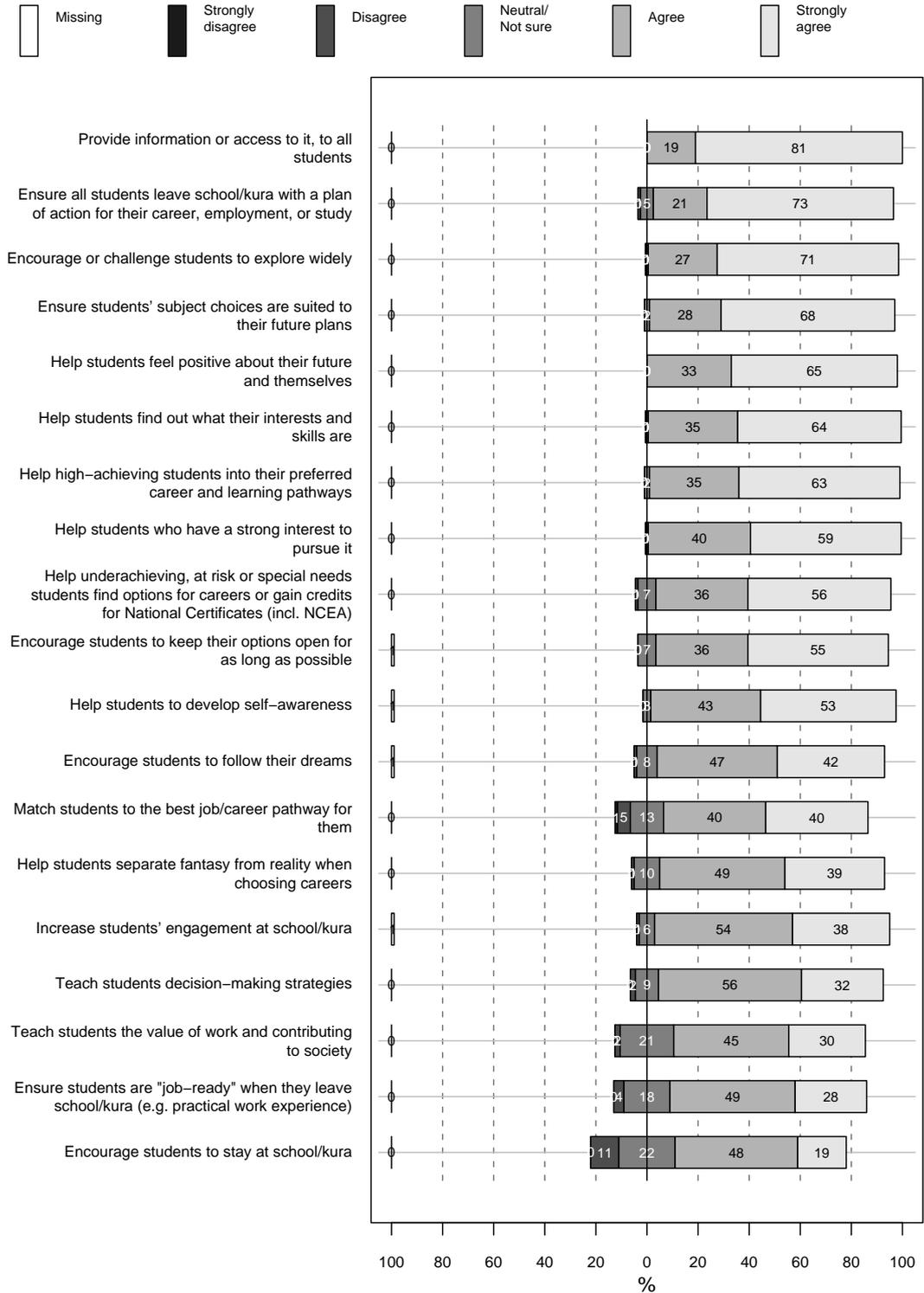
Statements covered a range of different broad and narrowly-focused possible careers education purposes. Some referred to school-specific outcomes such as *increase student engagement with school/kura, encourage students to stay at school, and help underachieving, at risk, or special needs students find options to gain credits for National Certificates*. Others referred to outcomes specific to the actual transition from school, such as *ensuring all students leave school with a plan of action*, and to career-specific outcomes such as *matching the student the best job/pathway for them, helping students separate fantasy from reality when choosing careers, and helping students find out what their interests and skills are*. We also included statements about quite broad ideas or life skills, such as *teaching students decision-making strategies* and *encouraging students to explore widely*.

Careers staff responses

Two overriding themes emerge from the way in which careers staff responded to the statements. Firstly there was very little disagreement with any of them. Instead, respondents expressed interesting variations in their degrees of agreement. Secondly, there was no apparent relationship between the degree of agreement and the broad or narrow nature of different statements, nor whether or not statements related to school-based outcomes, transition outcomes, career or pathway, or life more generally. Taken together, these themes highlight the variation and complexity within each careers advisory and transition role in the school: there is a lot that can or does count as careers education and very little that could not or does not.

Responses to these statements are shown in the Likert graphs below.

Figure 2 **Careers staff perceptions of the purposes of careers education in their school**



Notably to *provide information, or access to it, for all students* was the one purpose with 100 percent agreement and certainty. Eighty-one percent of careers staff *strongly agreed* and 19 percent *agreed* with this purpose. None of the careers staff *disagreed* or were *neutral/unsure*.

The purpose with which the most careers staff *disagreed* was *encouraging students to stay at school*. Eleven percent of respondents *disagreed* and a further 22 percent were *neutral/unsure* about it.

Some of the other statements, while still engendering agreement, did not provoke strong agreement and many seemed *unsure/neutral*. Although 88 percent in total *agreed* with *teach students decision-making strategies*, only just under a third (32 percent) were able to *strongly agree* with this. This is interesting given that there is increasing acknowledgement of the complexity involved in career decision making and expectations that there is no longer one career or job for life.

Less than a third (30 percent) *strongly agreed* with *teaching students value of work* and a further 21 percent were *neutral/unsure* (though only 2 percent *disagreed*). There were similar reactions to *ensuring students are job-ready when they leave school* with only 29 percent *strongly agreeing*, just under half (49 percent) *agreeing*, and 18 percent *neutral/unsure*. These latter two purposes were also among the widest spread in possible responses (measured by standard deviation). Other statements with a wide spread of responses, suggesting they were the most contentious statements, were *matching students to the best job/career pathway for them* and *encourage students to stay at school/kura*.

Statements with the least spread of responses, or where respondents were most similar in what they thought about the purpose, were *providing information, or access to it, for all students*, *helping students feel positive about themselves and their future*, *encourage students to explore widely*, and *encourage students with a strong interest to pursue it*.

Differences between schools

There were no major differences in the way that composite school careers staff thought about purposes in comparison to secondary careers staff, with one exception: composite school careers staff (61 percent) were significantly less likely to *strongly agree* with the purpose to *provide information, or access to it, for all students* than secondary schools staff (86 percent). This is unsurprising given that composite schools often see their students move on to secondary schools. This might be why composite school staff highlighted a (nonsignificant) trend in relation to purposes with school-specific outcomes. More composite school staff *strongly agreed* with *increasing student engagement with school* (47 percent) than secondary school staff (36 percent) and with *encouraging students to stay at school* (24 percent in comparison with 18 percent of secondary school staff).

There were no statistically significant differences in the way that staff at schools of different deciles responded. However, there was a (nonsignificant) trend in the way that staff in low-decile

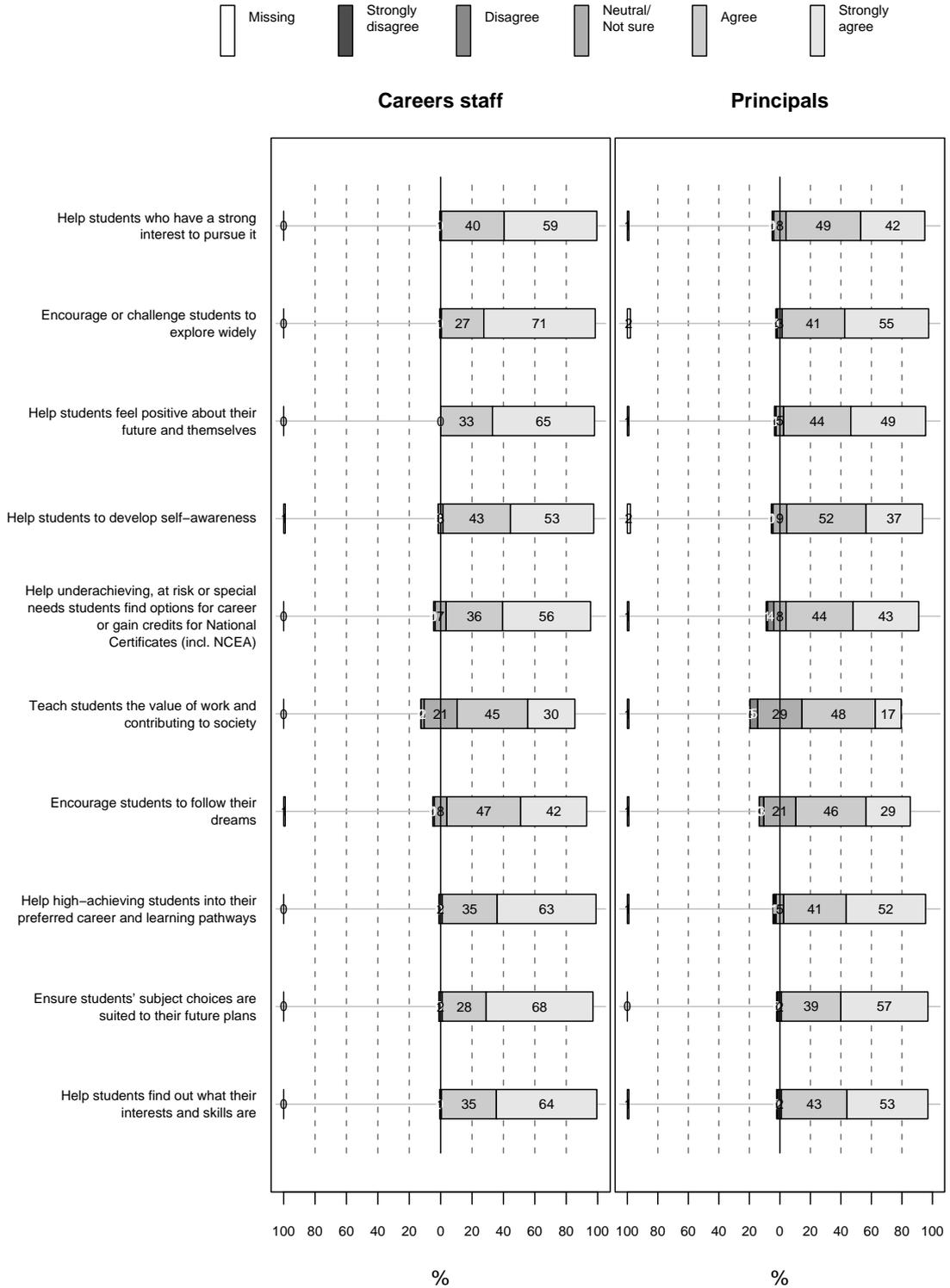
schools responded to some careers education purposes, highlighting some of the issues specific to their schools.

Low-decile school staff were more likely than medium- or high-decile school staff to *strongly agree* with purposes related to in-school outcomes that might also benefit the school as well as the individual student: *increasing student engagement with school, encouraging students to stay at school, and ensuring students are job-ready when they leave school*. They were also more likely to *strongly agree* with some of the purposes with a risk management potential: *helping students separate fantasy from reality and teaching students the value of work and contributing to society*. Low-decile school staff were also more likely than medium- or high-decile school staff to *strongly agree* with purposes that took a longer term view of individual student welfare: *helping students with a strong interest to pursue it, helping students to develop self-awareness, and teaching students decision-making strategies*.

Principals' responses

Principals had very similar overall agreement (*strongly agree* and *agree* responses) with careers staff, although careers staff were generally more likely to *strongly agree* with statements than principals. Principals did express less overall agreement than careers staff for *encourage students to follow their dreams* and *teach students the value of work and contributing to society*. These and the other most marked differences in agreement are shown in the following figure, although none of these differences were statistically significant.

Figure 3 Principals' and career staff differences on the careers education purposes



Ideas and their sources for careers staff

Having asked careers staff for their thoughts on the purposes of careers education, we also wanted to know where they got their ideas from and how useful they were. Again, we built the statement options from research and from experiences interacting with careers advisors and transition teachers.

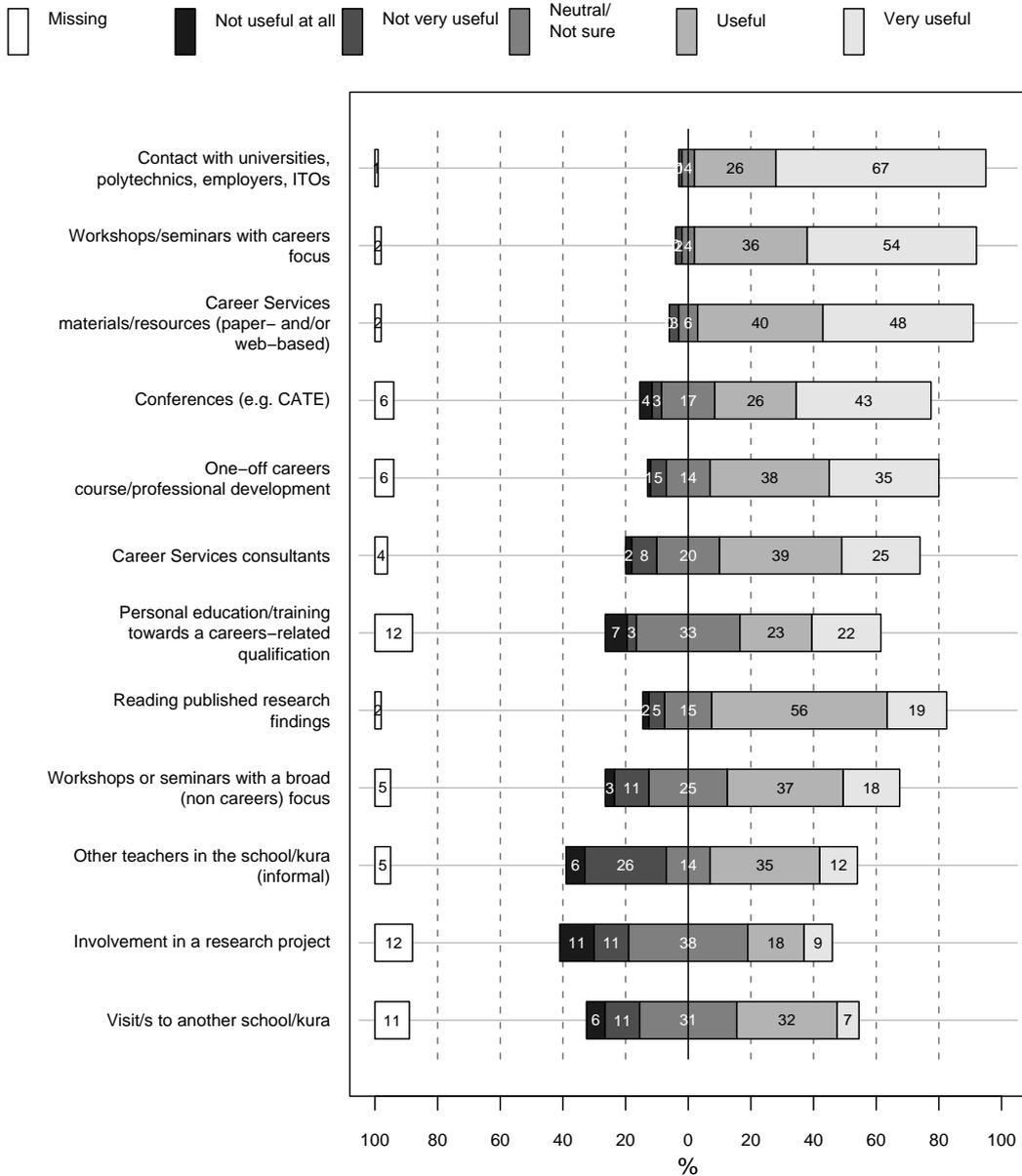
There was generally little disagreement with the statements about sources of new ideas for careers staff. However, like the purposes responses, there were interesting variations in the degree to which people agreed with the various options.

The most popular source of new ideas that two-thirds of careers staff found *very useful* (67 percent) was *contact with universities, polytechnics, employers, and ITOs*. A further 26 percent of careers staff also found this *useful*. If we take the high regard for this ideas source together with the most agreed-upon purpose of *providing information, or access to it, for all students* (see previous subsection), it seems that careers staff place a high value on real connections and relationships that can support them in their role of facilitating young people's transition from school to work, study, and training. Relationships with tertiary providers, employers, and ITOs are likely to mean that careers staff and students have easy access to accurate, up-to-date information about courses, training programmes, jobs, and career possibilities. Those relationships might also mean that students gain some direct access to, and familiarity with, campuses, programme co-ordinators, and potential employers, as well as opportunities to gather some information about what might actually be involved in a specific tertiary or employment commitment at a day-to-day level.

The next most popular source was *workshops and seminars with a careers focus*, with over half of careers staff (55 percent) finding it *very useful* and a further third (36 percent) finding it *useful*. This was followed by nearly half (48 percent) finding *Career Services materials and resources* *very useful* and a further 39 percent finding it *useful*. *Conferences (e.g. CATE)* was also a popular source, with 43 percent finding these *very useful* and a further 26 percent finding these *useful*.

The Likert graphs below show the statements and responses beginning with the source of ideas found to be *very useful* by the highest proportion of respondents.

Figure 4 Sources of ideas and their usefulness



Careers staff thought some sources were *useful* rather than *very useful*. However, the high proportions signalling usefulness suggests that these sources are still important. Thirty-five percent of careers staff thought *one-off careers course or professional development* was *very useful* and slightly more, 38 percent, thought it was *useful*. Similarly, 20 percent thought *reading published research findings* was *very useful* but more than half (55 percent) thought it was *useful*.

A quarter of careers staff thought *Career Services consultants* were *very useful* but more (40 percent) found them *useful* rather than *very useful*. Rather surprisingly a fifth were *neutral/unsure* on this and a further 8 percent thought consultants were *not useful*. The spread of responses to *Careers Services consultants* as a source of new ideas was one of the largest for this question. It

may be that the quality of this source is dependent upon the actual relationships involved and that these might be somewhat uneven in quality. It may be an issue with the consultants overall or perhaps with the ability of careers staff to access or make use of them. Although not significant, low-decile school staff were slightly more likely to rate *Career Services consultants* as a *very useful* source (41 percent) compared with mid-decile staff (27 percent) and high-decile staff (15 percent), and were also slightly *less* likely (41 percent) to rate *Career Services resources/materials* as *very useful* than mid-decile staff (50 percent) and high-decile staff (46 percent). This suggests the possibility that it is the relationship and not the materials which is most important to low-decile school staff and that these relationships are considered valuable.

There were several ideas sources about which careers staff were not enthusiastic. Just under a third (32 percent) of careers staff thought that *visits to another school* were *useful* but just under another third (32 percent) were *neutral/unsure* and 11 percent thought they were not *very useful*. Eighteen percent thought *workshops or seminars with a broad (noncareers) focus* were *very useful* but over a third (37 percent) thought they were *useful*, a quarter (25 percent) were *neutral/unsure*, and 11 percent thought they were *not useful*.

Perhaps surprisingly, careers staff were fairly diffident about the usefulness of *personal education/training towards a careers-related qualification* for new ideas. Only 22 percent of careers staff thought it was *very useful*. A further 23 percent thought it was *useful* and a full third (33 percent) were *neutral/unsure*. However, this is likely to be because less than a quarter of the responding careers staff actually have, or are studying towards, careers-specific qualifications (see Roles and positions section).

Careers staff were also diffident about *involvement in a research project*, with 9 percent thinking it *very useful*, 18 percent thinking it *useful*, and 38 percent *neutral/unsure*. We realise that “involvement” is a fairly loose term and may mean quite different things to different people. Some may be thinking about action research in which they or their school has taken a lead role; at the other end of the scale, someone might consider completing this questionnaire to constitute “involvement”. There is also potential overlap between several sources here: *workshops/seminars with a careers focus* and *conferences (e.g. CATE)*, both of which often include, or are based around, research findings, some of which have probably involved careers staff at some level.

These possible different interpretations colouring responses show up in a reading of responses by decile. Low-decile schools accorded a statistically significant higher level of usefulness to being involved in a research project with nearly a third (32 percent) thinking it was *very useful* compared to the average of 9 percent across all deciles.

The single source that provoked the widest range of responses (measured by standard deviation) was *other teachers in the school (informal)*. Only 13 percent thought this was *very useful* but 35 percent thought it was *useful*. However, just under a third (32 percent) thought this contact *not useful* (26 percent) or *not useful at all* (6 percent). Perhaps like the spread in response to *Career Services consultants*, this speaks to the uneven quality of relationships.

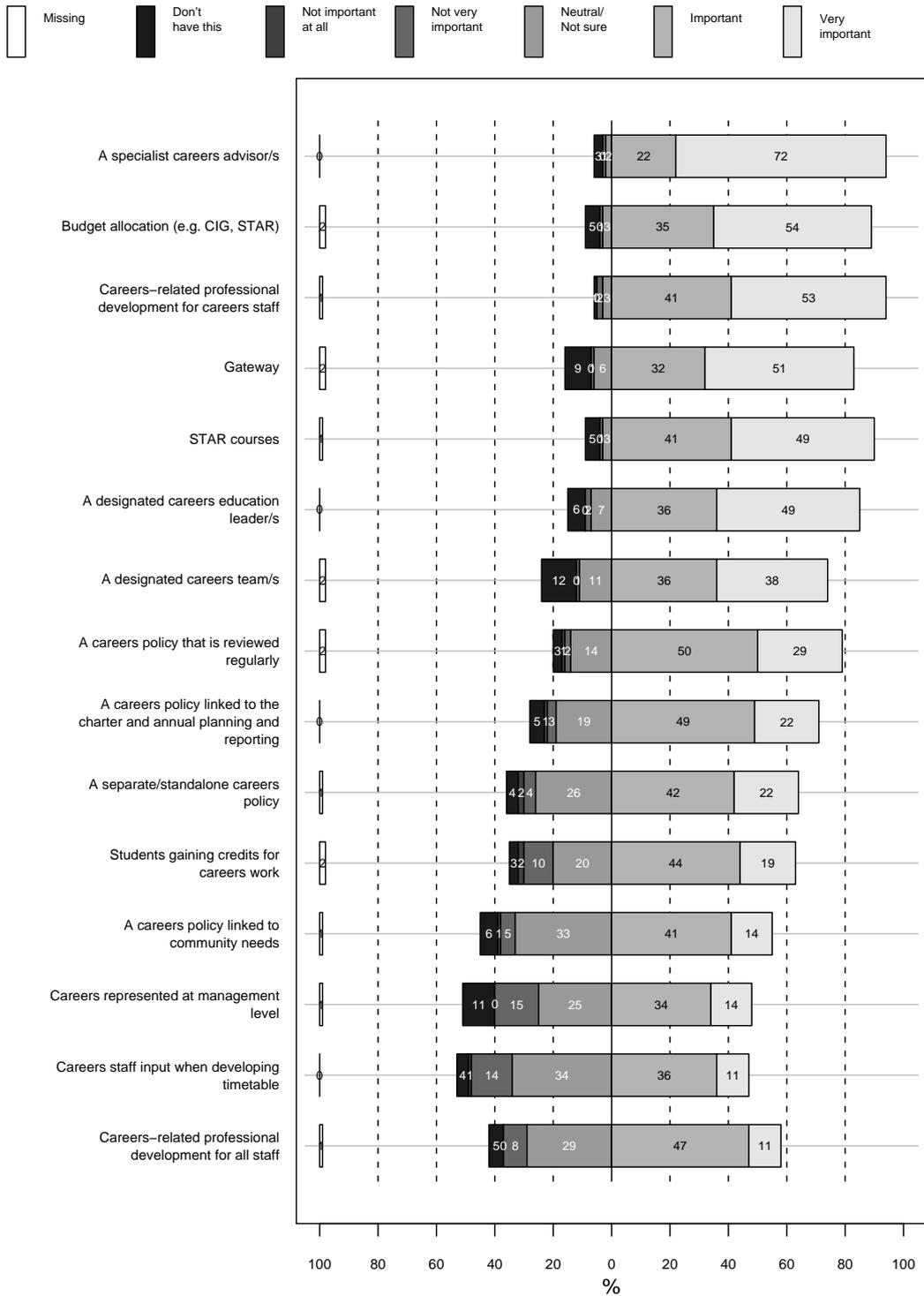
There were several statistically significant differences for school size and school type for *conferences* (e.g. *CATE*) and these are likely to be related because of the cross-over in size and type (i.e., most composite schools are also smaller schools). Composite school staff were less likely to find *conferences very useful* (29 percent as opposed to 46 percent for secondary school staff) or *useful* (18 percent as opposed to 28 percent for secondary school staff) and were more likely to be *neutral/unsure* (32 percent as opposed to 14 percent for secondary school staff) or find them *not useful* at all (13 percent as opposed to 2 percent). In keeping with this, staff were more likely to find *conferences very useful* as their schools got larger (very small 30 percent; small 39 percent; middle 41 percent; large 46 percent; very large 53 percent).

There was a similar (though not statistically significant) trend for *workshops/seminars with a careers focus* and *one-off careers course or professional development* with staff more likely to find these *very useful* the larger their school. Given that these three sources of ideas—*conferences*, *careers workshops*, and *one-off careers courses*—are types of formal professional development, this suggests that staff are able to better utilise their professional development if they are in a larger school and operating within a careers team where ideas can be shared and new practices can have team support.

Principals' perceptions of important careers education features

We were interested in principals' perceptions about careers education, as the leaders and key decision makers in schools. We provided a list of different aspects of careers education and asked them to indicate how important they considered these in their school. Their responses were primarily focused on the administration and funding of careers education, with the items most frequently valued relating to careers resources and programmes. The following figure shows responses ordered by those most frequently considered *very important* by principals.

Figure 5 Principals' perceptions of important careers education features in their school



Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of respondents considered a *specialist careers advisor/s* as very important to the provision of careers education within the school with a further 22 percent considering them important. There are likely to be several factors underlying this response which support having a specialist. Firstly, a large part of the careers education role is interacting with students and building relationships and connections with them, and with other teaching staff, in order to provide useful and appropriate advice and information. Secondly, there is a large amount of administration associated with the provision of careers education (especially in larger schools where documentation is required across a variety of areas of careers education). Thirdly careers staff are at the hub of a network of school-based and community-based careers services (employers, various different tertiary providers, industry training organisations, parents, community groups).

However, responses from careers staff about the nature of their role/s within the school (see Roles and positions section) indicated that very few could be considered *careers specialists* in the sense of working only in careers education; most have multiple roles across the school. However, schools with teams of careers staff may distribute the workload by partitioning specific jobs or areas within careers education.

Approximately half (49–54 percent) of respondents considered *budget allocation, careers-related professional development for careers staff, Gateway and STAR programmes, and a designated careers education leader/s* to be *very important*. The first of these, *budget allocation*, may relate to the types of careers-focused funding the school receives (CIG, STAR, Gateway) in addition to the manner in which such funding is allocated. The remaining items reflect activities that careers staff might carry out and/or responsibilities that they might hold.

Careers-related professional development for careers staff was rated *very important* or *important* by 94 percent of principals, but only 15 percent of careers staff reported holding careers-related qualifications and almost a quarter of careers staff (21 percent) were not members of professional careers associations (see Careers staff and their roles section). Careers staff may perceive a disconnection between professional development and the learning involved in gaining careers-related qualifications, particularly if their professional development experiences are about just-in-time strategies and knowledge and study towards qualifications seems to be about less immediate concerns such as theoretical knowledge underpinning careers education. However it might also be that access to professional development means careers staff do not need qualifications—and given that the careers education position is just one of the many school positions and responsibilities held by careers staff, it is logical for careers-specific qualifications to be a low priority.

There was a clear trend for more principals to consider the remaining items *important* rather than *very important*. It is likely that this is an indication that these items are not *as* important as the preceding ones. The former may reflect the principal's or school's philosophies regarding the role or focus of careers education (*careers policy linked to community needs, students gaining credits for careers work*) while the latter may simply relate to how careers is organised within the school; for example, *designated careers team* is unlikely to be important if there is no careers team at the

school. This is probably the reason for two statistically significant differences in response patterns: principals of urban schools and principals of large or very large schools (751 students plus) were more likely than those in rural locations and smaller schools to indicate that *a careers team* was very important.

There was also a (nonsignificant) trend for more of the principals of large and very large schools to consider *a specialist careers advisor/s, a designated careers education leader/s, and careers-related professional development for careers staff* as *very important* in comparison to their peers at smaller schools.

Principals from low-decile schools were statistically more likely to consider it very important for *students to gain credits for careers work* compared to their peers from medium- and high-decile schools.

The current careers climate

We asked careers staff and principals via their separate questionnaires for their perceptions of the current “careers climate”. We provided a wide range of statements about the broad social and political context for careers education today. Their responses were very similar, with a few interesting exceptions discussed at the end of the subsection.

Staff responses

Virtually all careers staff thought that employers were positive about their students in work placements or work experience and over a third (39 percent) *strongly agreed* that this was the case. Careers staff expressed some strong views when it came to the particular challenges and demands of careers education work in relation to aspects of the current climate.

Seventy-nine percent of staff felt that increased awareness of the importance of careers education had placed *additional demands upon their time and skills*. Over a third of careers staff (35 percent) *strongly agreed* and a further 44 percent *agreed* with that statement. There was no disagreement with this view. Just over half felt that their role had been *increasing in status within the school/kura in the last few years*. Twenty-one percent *strongly agreed* and 34 percent *agreed*.

Some of these more recent pressures and shifts came through in responses to the other statements about the relationship between students and careers education or careers staff. Almost three-quarters of staff felt that *students have increasingly unrealistic expectations about sports/celebrity/highly paid careers*. Just over a quarter (26 percent) *strongly agreed* and a further 48 percent *agreed* with this. More than three-quarters (78 percent) thought that *parents’ and students’ expectations frequently differ*. Sixteen percent *strongly agreed* and just under a further two-thirds *agreed*. Two-thirds thought that *in the past few years it has become harder for students*

to deal with all the information about possible careers, tertiary learning, and industry options. Nineteen percent *strongly agreed* and just under a further 48 percent *agreed*.

Most careers staff seemed satisfied with some of the post-school options available to students and with their ability to help promote these. Just over half (56 percent) thought that *publicity about skills shortages makes it easier to get students interested in trades-related careers* (16 percent *strongly agreed*, 43 percent *agreed*). Staff at low-decile schools were slightly more likely to *strongly agree* (22 percent) and staff at high-decile schools slightly less likely to *agree* (7 percent), in comparison with 15 percent of staff at mid-decile schools.

Two-thirds thought that *local tertiary options are appropriate for our students* (18 percent *strongly agreed* and a further 49 percent *agreed*). Staff at high-decile schools were slightly more likely to *strongly agree* with this at 26 percent). Just over half (55 percent) thought that they had *enough appropriate careers resources for their students* (7 percent *strongly agreed* and 48 percent *agreed*). Over half (58 percent) also *strongly agreed* (10 percent) or *agreed* (48 percent) that *National Certificates, including the NCEA, were a valuable record of student learning that helps with career decisions*. However, staff seemed to think they were less well placed in relation to promoting other post-school options. While nearly half (45 percent) thought there were *enough local employment opportunities for their students* (11 percent *strongly agreed* and a further 34 percent *agreed*), nearly a quarter (22 percent) were *neutral/unsure* about this and over another quarter *disagreed* (22 percent *disagreed* and another 5 percent *strongly disagreed*).

Just over a third (34 percent) did not agree that there were *enough local modern apprentices to meet demand from my school/kura*—27 percent *disagreed* and 7 percent *strongly disagreed* with this statement. Another third (34 percent) felt *neutral/unsure* about this. Only a quarter (26 percent) *agreed* with the statement. Just under half (48 percent) thought that *student loans put many students off tertiary study* (16 percent *strongly agreed* and 32 percent *agreed*).

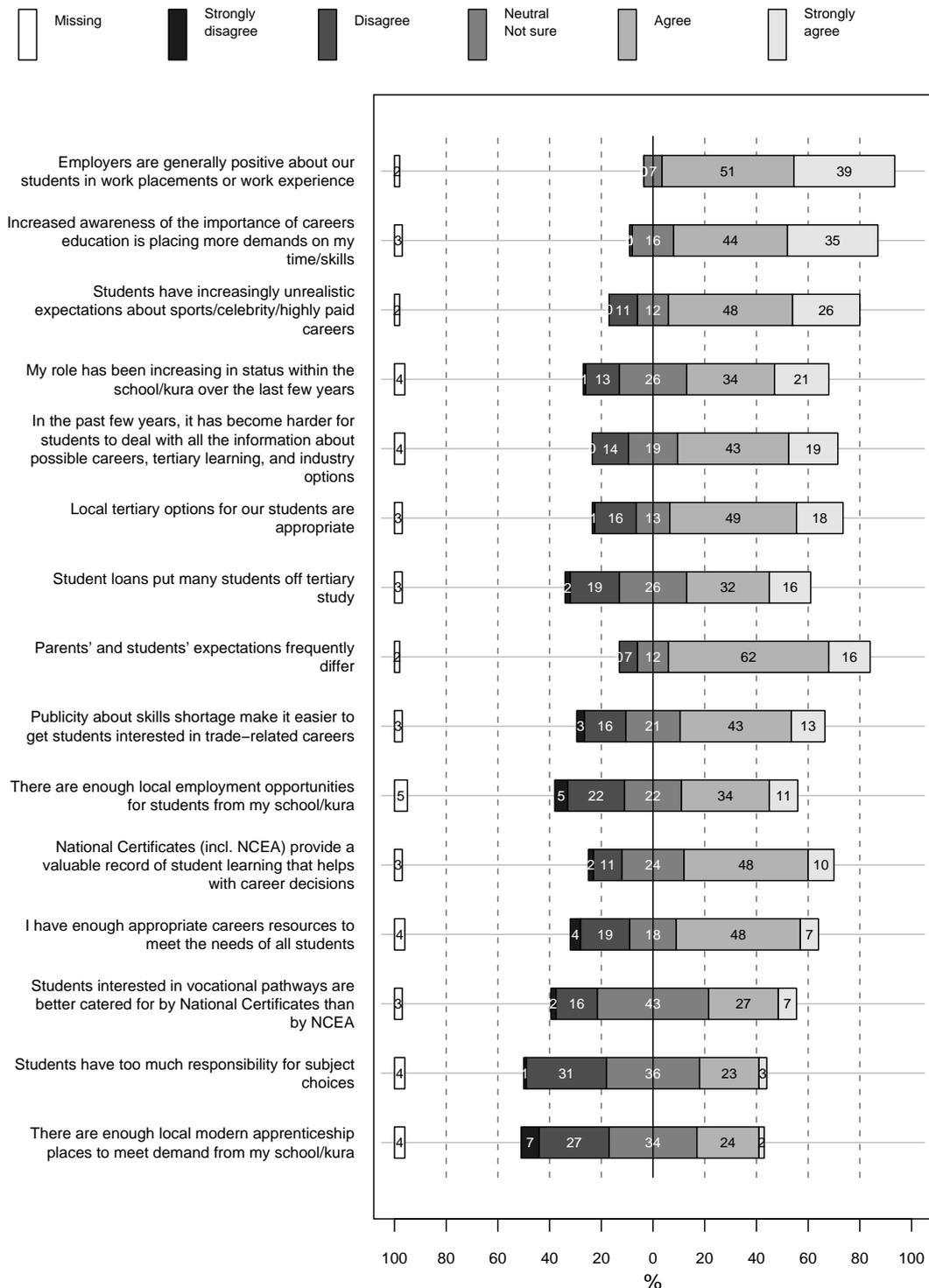
There were several statements about which many staff did not express very clear opinion or seemed contentious. Just under half (43 percent) were *neutral/unsure* on the question of whether *students interested in vocational pathways are best catered for by National Certificates than by the NCEA*.⁴ Eighteen percent *disagreed* with this statement. All the disagreement came from large schools.

Only about a quarter (26 percent) of staff *agreed* that *students have too much responsibility for subject choices* with only 3 percent of that *strongly agreeing*. Instead, nearly a third (32 percent) *disagreed* (1 percent of these *strongly disagreed*) and just over a third (34 percent) were *neutral/unsure*. This seems to reflect shifts which have seen students increasingly “responsibilised” and under pressure to make decisions about subject choice, school programme,

⁴ The NCEA is in fact a National Certificate in itself and this is how we would normally think of it (see Learning Curves reports). However, we phrased statements in this questionnaire to take account of the more popular way of talking about the NCEA and National Certificates as quite distinct and avoid any confusion by being unnecessarily technical.

post-school studies, and career (Vaughan, 2003; Vaughan et al., 2006). It is also consistent with new challenges for careers staff to form new or different relationships and ways of working—with students, parents, other school staff, industry representatives, and tertiary training providers.

Figure 6 **Careers staff views on the current careers climate**



There were several nonsignificant and significant trends in responses from staff at schools of different decile groupings. Mid-decile staff and high-decile staff were slightly more likely to *disagree* (31 percent and 38 percent respectively) that students have too much responsibility for subject choices in comparison with low-decile staff who *disagreed* (18 percent).

Low-decile staff were slightly more likely to agree that National Certificates give a valuable record for careers decisions (23 percent) than mid-decile staff (9 percent) and high-decile staff (8 percent). They were also statistically more likely to express agreement with *students have unrealistic expectations about celebrity/sports/highly paid careers*. Twenty-three percent *strongly agreed* and 68 percent *agreed*, in comparison with mid-decile staff (29 percent *strongly agreed*; 46 percent *agreed*) and high-decile staff (19 percent *strongly agreed* and 44 percent *agreed*).

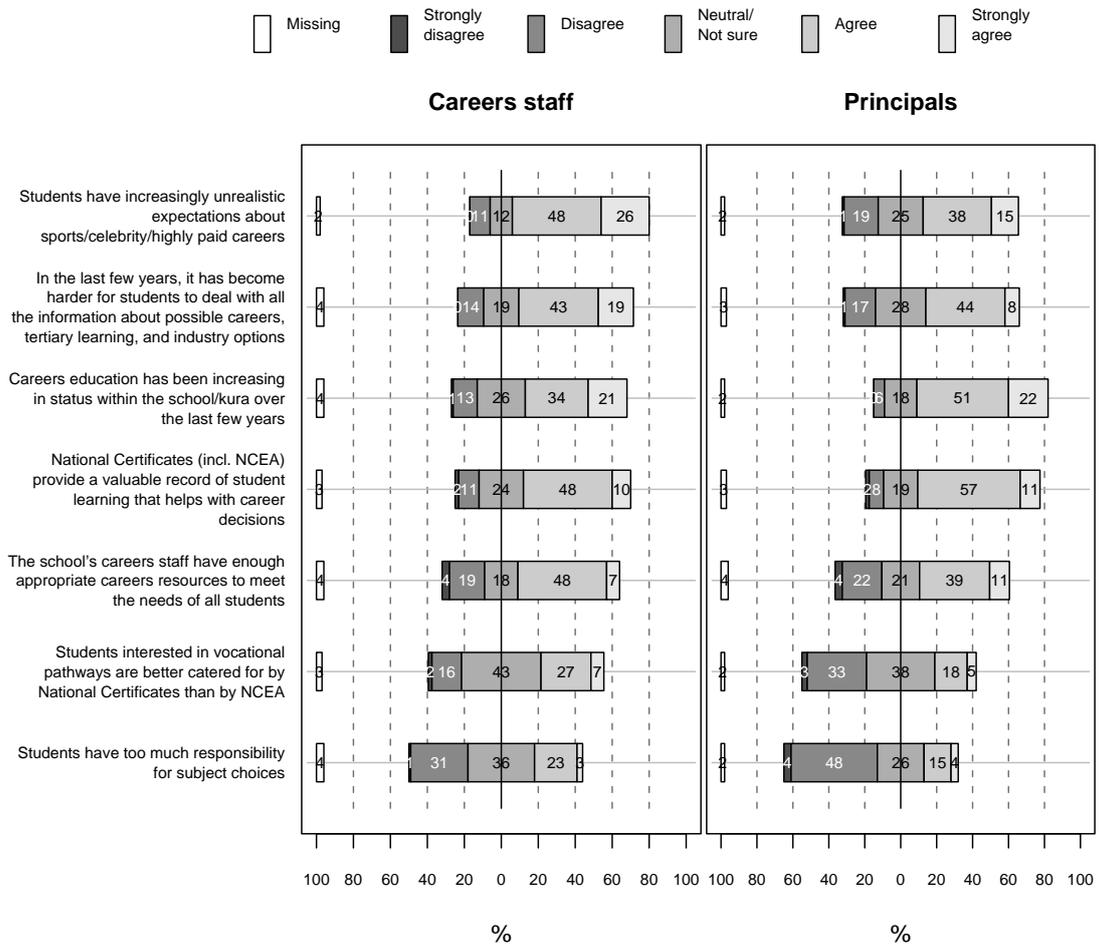
Mid-decile staff and high-decile staff were statistically more likely to disagree with the statement that in the last few years it has become harder for students to deal with all the careers information about possible careers (15 percent and 19 percent respectively). Low-decile staff expressed no disagreement with this statement. Nor did any disagree with the statement *student loans put many students off tertiary study*. However, mid-decile staff (17 percent) and a third of high-decile staff (33 percent) *disagreed* with this. Just under half (45 percent) of low-decile staff were *neutral/unsure* about it.

Principals

Principals gave remarkably similar responses to statements about career climate as careers staff. There were, however, some interesting differences in response to a few of the statements.

A third of principals (33 percent) *disagreed* that students interested in vocational pathways are better catered for by National Certificates other than NCEA and a further 3 percent *strongly disagreed*. This is quite a different view from that of careers staff—only 16 percent *disagreed* (and a further 2 percent *strongly disagreed*).

Figure 7 Principals' views on the current careers climate



4. Careers education activities in schools

Overview

In this section we report on the kinds of activities careers staff engage in with students or draw on in working with students. We cover careers staff views on the importance and frequency of different activities, activities employed with student target groups, and tracking of students into post-school destinations. This provides some of the important detail in how careers education operates in schools and moves beyond recording *which* activities are used to *when*, *how*, and *with whom* they are used.

Overall, careers staff considered nearly all activities to be *important* or *very important/vital* in their work. There was a trend for activities carried out with larger groups of students (or sometimes entire year levels) to occur regularly (*annually* or *1–2 times before students leave school*) compared with activities that focused on smaller groups of students with specific careers needs which tended to occur on a more ad hoc basis. The majority of careers staff indicated that their school did track students but there was variation over the groups of students that schools tracked and the tracking period length of time.

Careers education activities and their importance

We asked careers staff to indicate how important they considered a series of different careers activities. The most notable thing about their responses was the rating of nearly every activity as *important* or *very important/vital*. The most likely reason for this trend is that all of these activities are considered *very important/vital* in circumstances where they are regularly used by schools and seen as *important* in situations where their use is more sporadic.

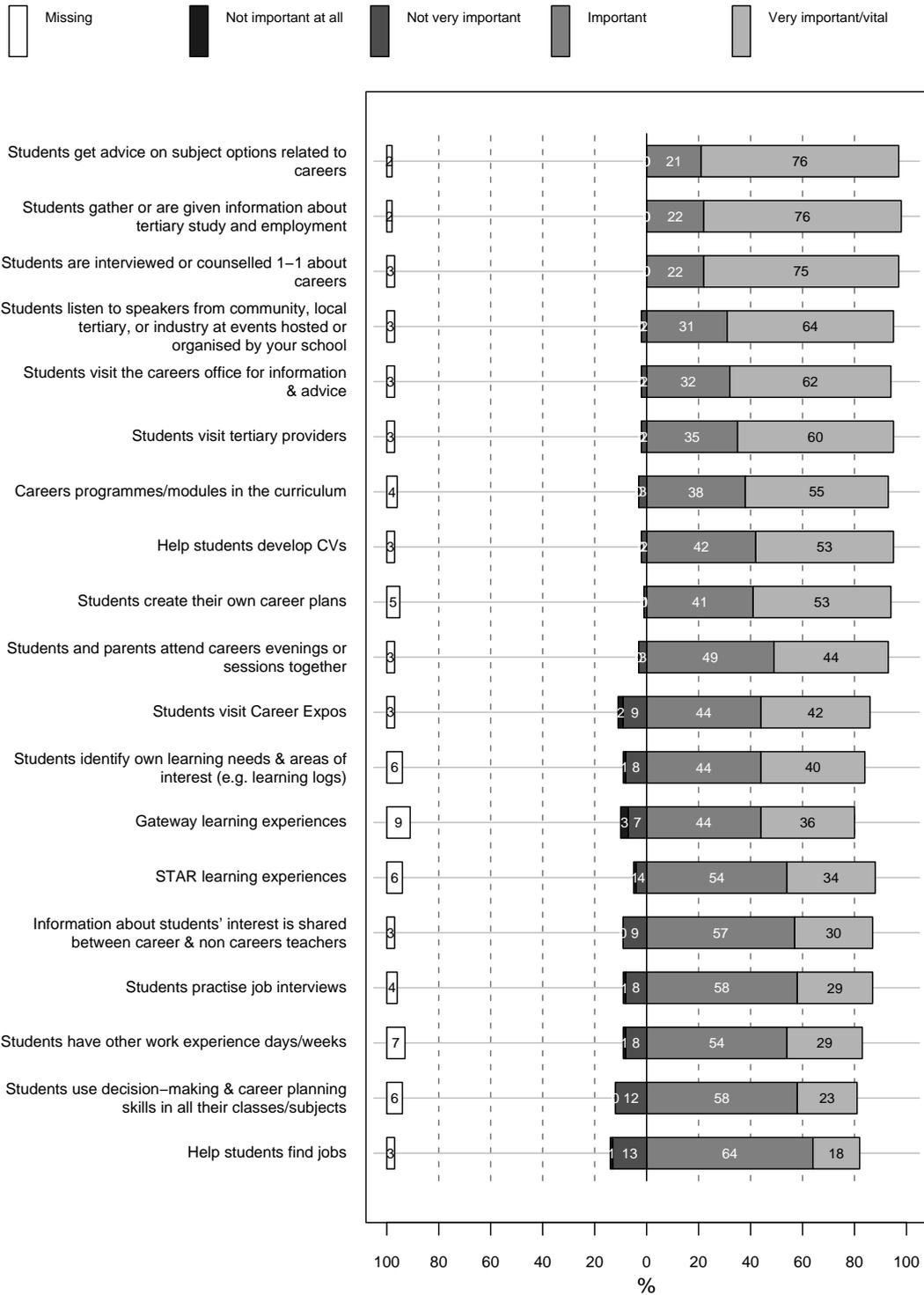
Three-quarters (75 percent) of respondents rated the activities *students get advice on subject options related to careers*, *students gather or are given information about tertiary study and employment*, and *students are interviewed or counselled 1–1 about careers* as *very important/vital* with another 21–22 percent indicating these were *important*. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) advised that they considered *students listen to speakers from community, local tertiary, or industry at events hosted, or organised by, your school* as a *very important/vital* activity. It is unsurprising that the first three activities are so highly valued by careers staff as they reflect some of the aspects of careers education that careers staff identified as key in other sections of this report.

Subject choice, information about further training and/or employment, and 1–1 interaction with careers staff are activities that engage students directly in making decisions and choices about potential careers. In addition, these activities encourage forward planning on the part of students so that pathways of interest are not closed by a lack of suitable qualifications.

Activities that were considered equally *very important/vital* or *important* by respondents were *students and parents attend careers evenings or sessions together, students visit career expos, students identify own learning needs and areas of interest, and Gateway learning experience*. While these are important activities for careers education they may not suit the careers needs of every school. In some instances the involvement of *parents* in students' careers decision making and planning may be considered vital whereas there may be factors in other schools that limit the effectiveness of this approach. Similarly, the *Gateway* programme is not on offer in all schools so differences over its perceived value may reflect that it is not an activity that careers staff in all schools are providing. This was supported by the only statistically significant difference seen in relation to this question where careers staff from high-decile schools are less likely to rate *STAR* or *Gateway learning experiences* as *very important/vital* compared to their peers at low- and medium-decile schools.

Since around three-quarters or more of careers staff considered all the activities to be *very important/vital* or *important*, we picked out activities that drew a larger proportion of *important* and *not very important* ratings, rather than *very important/vital* and *important* ratings. These activities were *students practice job interviews, students have other work experience days/weeks, students use decision-making and career planning skills in all their classes/subjects, and help students find jobs*. All of these activities were considered *important* by 59–64 percent of respondents with a further 8–13 percent indicating that they were *not very important*. Aside from *students use decision-making and career planning skills in all their classes/subjects*, these activities are focused on smaller groups of students in preparation for leaving school to pursue employment or vocational training.

Figure 8 **Careers education activities and their importance**



Frequency of careers education activities

We presented careers staff with a range of possible options to rate the frequency with which they carried out activities with students. These options variously implied different degrees of formality

or planning. The first two, *scheduled annually or more often* and *1–2 times before students leave school*, suggested a degree of formality or scheduling. The third, *happens when needed or ad hoc*, indicated a more just-in-time approach or use on an as-and-when-needed basis. We also tried to capture situations or systems that allowed targeted use of certain activities only when required.

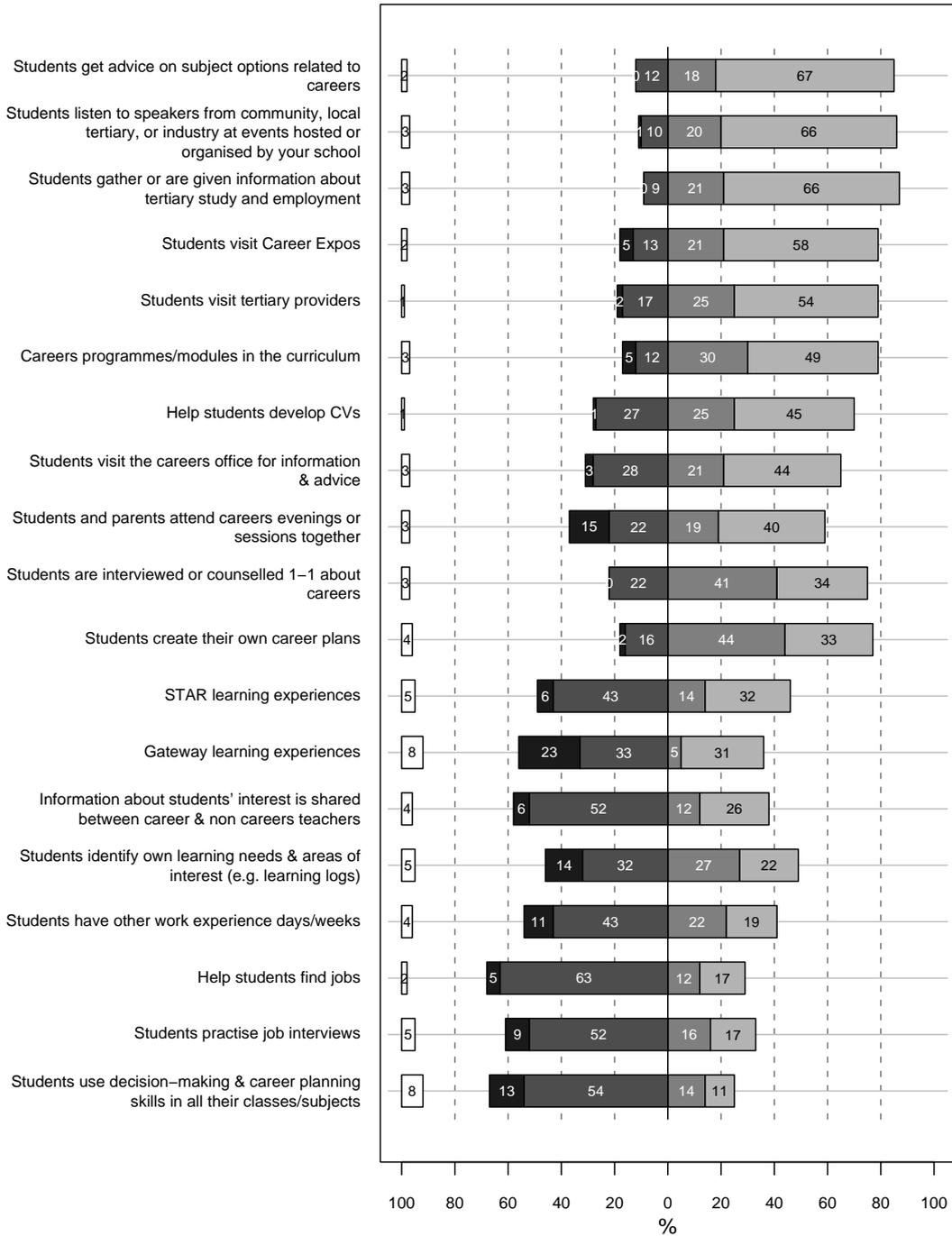
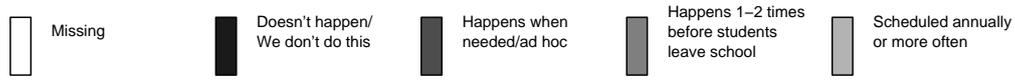
This means that the visible trend relating an activity's rated importance with its frequency does not tell the whole story. We should also take into account the nature of the activity as there are year level-wide or school-wide activities in addition to individual and/or small (target) group activities. It may also be entirely appropriate that some activities rated *vital/very important* happen only on an *ad hoc/when needed* basis.

The following figure shows careers staff responses about the frequency of occurrence for careers education activities. Two-thirds (66–67 percent) of careers staff reported the activities *students get advice on subject options related to careers, students listen to speakers from the community, local tertiary, or industry at events hosted or organised, and students gather or are given information about tertiary study and employment* were *scheduled annually or more often*. Approximately a fifth of careers staff (18–21 percent) noted that these activities occurred *1–2 times before students leave school*.

Two-fifths of careers staff (41–44 percent) advised that two activities, *students are interviewed or counselled 1–1 about careers* and *students create their own careers plan* happened *1–2 times before students leave school*. A further 33–34 percent of careers staff reported that these activities were *scheduled annually or more often*.

The activities *help students find jobs* (63 percent), *students use decision-making and career planning skills in their classes/subjects* (54 percent), and *students practise job interviews* (52 percent) were most frequently reported as occurring *ad hoc/when needed*.

Figure 9 **Frequency of activities**



Importance and frequency comparisons

The trend from a cross-tabulation of activities (importance by frequency) showed that activities ranked as *very important/vital* were more likely to happen *annually or more often* or *1–2 times before students leave school*. Activities ranked *important* were likely to happen *1–2 times before students leave school* or *when needed/ad hoc*. This indicates activities ranked as *very important/vital* were more likely to follow a formal regime or regular timetable, whereas many of the activities rated *important* occurred when a particular need was identified and intervention or support was required for an individual or group of students.

Related to the lower level of importance ascribed to *STAR* and *Gateway learning experiences*, respondents from high-decile schools were significantly more likely to run *STAR* and *Gateway learning experiences* only *when required/ad hoc* or advise that they *don't do* these activities.

Schools with 500 students or more were significantly more likely to have *students and parents attend careers evenings* that were scheduled *annually* or more often than smaller schools. This is likely to reflect the level of organisation required to allow careers interaction with large numbers of students and their parents. In smaller schools it is more likely that this interaction can be managed informally without the need for set careers evenings.

Careers education activities and student target groups

We asked careers staff to specify activities that they used with some recognised target groups: *Māori student*;, *Pacific student*; *refugee student*; *migrant student*; *high achieving students*; *students with high truancy*; *students applying for early leaving exemption*; *students undecided about careers*; and *special needs students*.

In order to calculate the proportion of activities being used with different target groups, we counted only careers staff responses that indicated they used an activity with a target group. In other words, we calculated percentages based on the number of actual responses rather than the number of responses *and* nonresponses because we took nonresponses to be an indication that particular groups were either not targeted in the school or were simply not present in the school (for example, some schools do not have any or many refugee students).

We selected the *top 5* activities occurring in schools for each target group. Generally, careers staff used a very small repertoire of activities with target groups of students. Although careers staff chose from a list of 19 different possible careers activities, there were eight activities used in particular. These eight, well-used activities made appearances in the *top 5* grouping of activities for each target group. Five of these activities were repeated with nearly every target group.

Three activities—*students get advice on subject options related to careers*, *students listen to speakers from community, local tertiary, or industry at events hosted, or organised by your school*, and *students visit the careers office for information and advice*—were used with all nine

groups. Two activities, *students are interviewed or counselled 1–1 about careers* and *students gather or are given information about tertiary study and employment*, were used with seven of the nine groups. The activity *help students develop CVs* was only seen in the *top 5* of schools that had *refugee students* and/or *students applying for early leaving exemption*. Only schools with *Pacific students* had *students visit tertiary providers* in their *top 5*. This pattern was repeated for *careers programmes/modules in the curriculum* which was a *top 5* activity for schools with *special needs students* only. The following table shows the *top 5* activities and the groups they target.

Table 7 **Top ranked activity identified within each group**

Top ranked activity identified ¹	Target group	Percent reporting activities with these groups (n=201) %
Students gather or are given information about tertiary study and employment	Māori	90
	High achieving	88
	Pacific	77
Students are interviewed or counselled 1–1 about careers	Undecided about careers	91
	Special needs	80
	High truancy	76
	Early leavers	73
Students listen to speakers from community, local tertiary, or industry at events hosted or organised by school	Migrant	56
	Refugee	43

¹ Top ranked activity is the most common activity that schools operate with specified group of students.

As the table above shows, very similar *top 5* activities were used across all the target groups. The most frequently reported activity used with *Māori*, *Pacific*, and *high achieving students* was *students gather or are given information about tertiary study and employment*. This activity has some scope for student-directed activity in the collection of interesting or relevant tertiary information although it may also be about careers staff distributing (relevant) information, echoing the most highly rated *provision of information* purpose reported in the Careers staff and principal perspectives on careers education section. It is likely that both *Māori* and *Pacific students* are grouped with *high achieving students* here because the goal of this activity is increasing awareness, or encouragement, of further education at tertiary level. In addition, these groups may comprise a significant proportion of the school population and as such might be targeted en masse alongside other strategies used to provide careers information to students.

Schools with *migrant* and *refugee students* most regularly used the activity *students listen to speakers from community, local tertiary, or industry at events hosted or organised by your school*, although we separated out these categories in recognition that these groups were likely to have very different needs. It is likely that activities for both groups are targeted at broadening students'

knowledge of potential pathways they could pursue and encouraging the expression of interest/s in a variety of areas. Once students' knowledge of potential pathways and careers information has increased, more specific assistance could be provided to further guide these students.

There was a similar pattern seen with the activity *students are interviewed or counselled 1-1 about careers* which was the most commonly reported activity for *students with high truancy, students applying for early leaving exemption, students undecided about careers, and special needs students*. This activity seems targeted at groups of students who may be less sure of potential options or requiring individual advice or assistance. Of the three activities discussed this is likely to be the most resource intensive as it involves careers staff interaction with individual students rather than presentations to larger groups.

Frequency and importance of the top ranked careers education activities

Careers staff indicated how often the three top ranked activities (*students gather or are given information about tertiary study and employment, students listen to speakers from community, local tertiary, or industry at events hosted, or organised by your school, and students are interviewed or counselled 1-1 about careers*) occurred within the school and how important they were considered. This highlighted some interesting trends about how frequently these activities were used in schools. Activities that were focused on larger groups of students seemed more likely to be conducted *annually* compared to those targeting smaller groups which occurred *1-2 times before students leave school or when needed/ad hoc*. Irrespective of the reported frequency of the activity, the majority of respondents considered the activities to be *very important/vital* (68-84 percent across all groups).

The activity *students gather or are given information about tertiary study and employment* (top ranked for *Māori, Pacific, and high achieving students*) was more likely to be used *annually* (68-69 percent). It was also most likely to be used in schools where one or more of these groups comprised a sizeable portion of the student population. A further 21-22 percent reported this activity was used *1-2 times before students leave school*.

Indications about the usage of *students are interviewed or counselled 1-1 about careers* (top ranked for students with *high truancy, students applying for early leaving exemption, students undecided about careers, and special needs students*) pointed to a different pattern. This activity was more likely to occur *1-2 times before students leave school* (41-46 percent) than occur *annually* (33-37 percent) or occur *when needed/ad hoc* (20-22 percent).

The last activity, *students listen to speakers from community, local tertiary, or industry at events hosted or organised by your school*, was the top ranked activity by respondents from schools with *migrant and/or refugee students*. These careers staff reported the activity was more likely to happen *annually* (66-73 percent) rather than *1-2 times before students leave school* (15-17

percent). It is possible that the level of organisation required for such events such as “booking” speakers and/or venues means that they are a planned rather than a spontaneous event.

Activities across student year levels

The following table shows the activities that most or all students engage in at each year level, as reported by careers staff. We have grouped the activities to show participation increases with each year level, then activities with fairly similar participation regardless of year level, and finally activities with participation that varies by year level but without an increasing or decreasing pattern. The categories or levels of student participation were specified as *most/all* or *some*. The first (*most/all*) was intended to draw responses from careers staff who ran activities targeted at all students within a year level. We included the *most* option as we recognised that, while careers staff may aim to have all students participate, there are many reasons why this may not happen. We anticipated that the majority of activities targeted at *most/all* students would be of a scheduled and organised nature due to the potentially large number of students involved. The latter category (*some*) reflected activities where careers staff focused on a target group of students or individuals within the school.

The following table shows that much of the information gathering (by students) and provision (by careers advisors, employers, and tertiary providers) becomes more frequent for most/all students as they progress through the year levels and involves a third to over half of *most/all* students by Year 13. This is not surprising given that students’ need to consider options becomes more immediate in senior years and that access to, and provision of, information about options has been consistently highlighted by careers staff throughout the questionnaire as one of the most important things they do in their job.

Other activities appear to show up a targeting of students at specific year levels. *Participation in STAR courses, attending work experience days, and working with careers/transition teachers to make appropriate subject choices* all peak at Year 11. The latter is also one of the most participated in activities, consistently across the years, reflecting the importance placed on subject choice and recognition of the degree to which different subject options open up or close down future study, training, or career opportunities for students (Hipkins et al., 2005).

Work on individual career plans has fairly consistent high rates of participation for *most/all* students across year levels, although it does vary. *Participation in career-related modules in the curriculum* for *most/all* students is very high (82 percent) and in fact highest at junior year levels. This is consistent with baseline data on CPaBL schools which notes that Year 10 is the most common level at which careers education is delivered as part of the curriculum (Education Review Office, 2007).

Table 8 **Activities that most/all students participate in school at different year level**

	Years 9/10 %	Year 11 %	Year 12 %	Year 13 %
Activities with participation increasing with year level				
Attend trips to careers events/expos or to tertiary provider sites	15	26	52	54
Interact with industry, employer, or tertiary guest speakers at school	12	16	33	49
Visit career office	13	22	36	59
Discuss careers with parents and career/transition teachers	13	14	22	32
Get 1–1 advice with member of careers team	8	22	38	63
Activities with participation peaking at Year 11				
Participate in STAR courses	4	5	12	8
Work with careers teachers to make appropriate subject choices	31	38	49	47
Attend work experience days	8	5	13	7
Activities with varied participation at year levels				
Work on individual career or learning plans	39	27	37	46
Participate in career-related programmes/modules in curriculum	82	38	41	32
Participate in Gateway programmes*	-	1.0	3	3

* The low rate of participation for most/all students here reflects the way that Gateway programmes operate and target specific students.

Careers staff responses from different sized schools showed several statistically significant differences. Careers staff from very small and small schools were more likely to report that *most/all* Years 9/10 and Year 11 students *interact with industry, employer, or tertiary guest speakers at school* than their peers at larger schools. Very small school staff were also more likely to indicate that *most/all* students were participating in *looking for jobs, making CVs, or practising job interview skills* at Year 11. Along with the very large schools, they are also more likely to cite *students visiting the careers office* at Year 11.

Very small school staff were more likely to report that *most/all* Year 12 students *participate in career-related programmes/modules in curriculum, participate in STAR and Gateway courses, interact with industry, employer, or tertiary guest speakers at school, and looking for jobs, making CVs, or practising job interview skills*. Very small school staff were also more likely to report that *most/all* Year 13 students *participate in STAR and Gateway courses*.

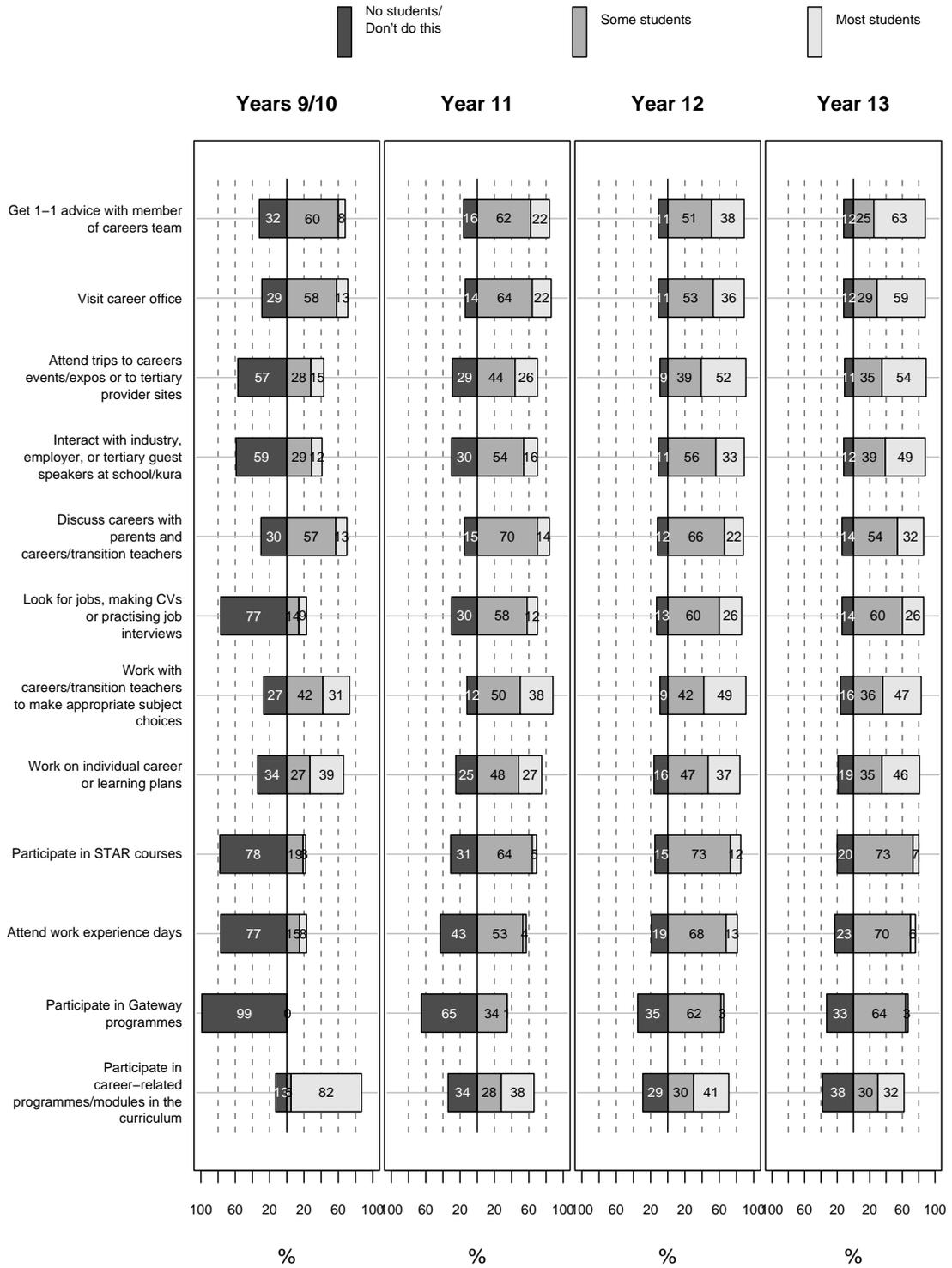
Careers staff responses from very small schools showed a clear yet nonsignificant trend when they advised that *most/all* Years 9/10, Year 11, and Year 12 students *discuss careers with parents and career/transition teachers*.

The next figure shows a comparison of activities in which *some* students, or *most/all* students, participate across the year levels.

Several interesting patterns emerge in a comparison of participation level. For example, *discuss careers with parents and a careers/transition teacher* is something that happens more for *some* students than for *most/all* students. This may be an example of an organised activity where efforts are made to reach as many students and parents as possible—reflected in other responses to questions where parents are important and attempts are made—but in reality it is difficult to achieve. *Get 1–1 advice with member of careers team* is something that involves a greater proportion of students as year level increases, with the proportion of *some* students decreasing over the years as the proportion of *most/all* students increases over the years.

Several activities showed trends of little or no participation by students at Years 9/10. These activities could be grouped into those focused on providing vocational skills and/or experiences (*look for jobs, making CVs or practising job interviews, participate in STAR and Gateway programmes, and attend work experience days*) and those that seek to prepare students for tertiary study (*attend trips to careers events/expos or to tertiary provider site and interact with industry, employer, or tertiary guest speakers at school/kura*). While student participation increased according to year level for both the vocationally and tertiary oriented groups, a clear difference could be seen in the *scope* of student participation. The vocationally themed activities were more frequently targeted at *some students* across year levels while the tertiary focused activities were more likely to be offered to *most/all* students at Years 12 and 13.

Figure 10 **Activities in which students participate**



Tracking students

A potentially useful source of information for gauging the impact and success of careers education is tracking the pathways of ex-students. We asked careers teachers/advisors to indicate whether the school had a strategy for tracking students. Participants were asked if the school had any particular groups of students they focused on or whether they sought to track as many students as possible. Tracking such information may allow schools to examine the destinations of past students and the types of careers information and activities they were exposed to while at school. This information may give schools an opportunity to see how well their careers education programme is meeting the needs of students and if there are any areas where current students may need additional careers education. In some cases, schools sought to gather information about particular groups of students whereas other schools attempted to track all ex-students. In instances where schools provided a reason why they did not track students, most advised that a lack of resources (*time*) was the main barrier.

In total, 61 percent of respondents advised that the school attempted to track *as many students as we can*. A further 22 percent indicated they attempted to track *specific groups* of students, with 12 percent of schools reporting *we don't do this*.

Tracking specific groups

We asked participants to indicate which groups of students, if any, the school focused on for the purposes of tracking destinations post-school. Respondents included those who had noted the school tracked *as many students as we can* in addition to those who tracked *specific groups*. It appears that the former group sought to track as many students from these groups as possible rather than the entire student population. Thirty-eight percent of those who ticked either of those options (*tracking as many students as we can* or *tracking specific groups*) did not go on to nominate a specific group or groups.

For those who did indicate specific groups tracked by the school, the most frequently selected groups were *Years 13/14 students* (32 percent), followed by *Māori students* (25 percent), *Gateway students* (25 percent), and *high achieving students* (20 percent). Low-decile schools were significantly more likely to track *Māori*, *Pasifika*, *high achieving*, *low achieving*, and *Gateway students*.

As it was possible, if not likely, for schools to track multiple groups of students, we calculated how many groups were selected by respondents. More than half of the respondents (56 percent) did not select any groups due to the school either not tracking specific groups or attempting to track all students, regardless of any groups for which they might qualify. Thirteen percent of participants indicated the school focused on tracking one specific group. Almost a third (32 percent) indicated that they tracked two or more groups (to a maximum of 14 groups).

Nearly a third of respondents (31 percent) indicated that the school tracked students for *up to 6 months* with a further 22 percent tracking for *up to 12 months*. Schools that tracked students for

between *1–2 years* comprised just 15 percent of responses. Interestingly, composite schools were significantly more likely to track students for 12 months or longer.

The most frequently cited reasons for not tracking students were *time* (15 percent) and that *other educational organisations* (such as tertiary providers) *were already doing this* (11 percent).

5. Careers education within the school context

Overview

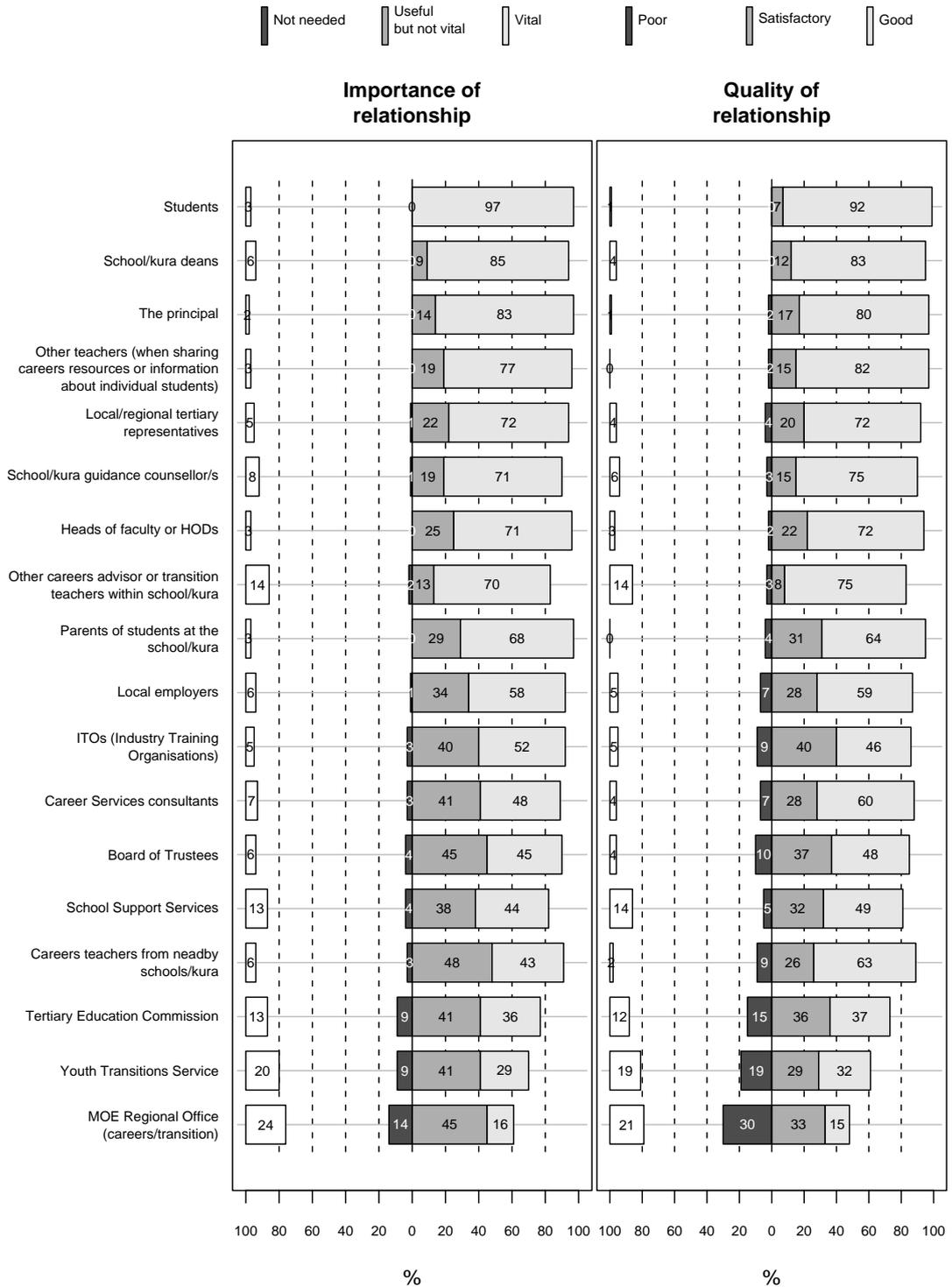
Having privileged the roles and perspectives of careers staff in the opening sections of this report, we now turn to some of the key aspects of the school context in which careers staff work. In this section we cover key relationships, school policy, careers education funding, school and careers-specific decision making, and careers education facilities. Principals' perceptions about careers education funding are also included and contrasted with careers staff views.

There was a close match between the importance and quality of relationships that careers staff had with various individuals and groups within their school, and with organisations and individuals outside the school. Generally they saw their most important and highest quality relationships as being in-school, with the exception of positive and important relationships with local tertiary representatives. Most schools had a standalone careers policy and reference to careers education in several other policies. Careers staff seemed well connected in terms of playing a key role in careers-related decision making, though a third of staff had management positions in the school anyway. Principals and careers staff were more involved in careers funding decisions than boards of trustees or senior management, but interestingly also saw each other as the lead decision maker.

Key relationships in careers education

We asked careers staff to consider their relationships with a number of key people and organisations, and to rate both the quality *and* importance of those relationships *vis-à-vis* their careers education role. The majority of responses showed a close match between the rated importance of relationships and the quality of those relationships. Even more encouraging, careers staff gave a strong indication that the best quality relationships are with those they see as most important to their work—students, deans, principals, other teachers, tertiary representatives, guidance counsellors, HODs (heads of department), and other careers staff.

Figure 11 Importance and quality of relationships in careers education



Not surprisingly, nearly all careers staff (97 percent) reported that their relationship with *students* was *vital* to their work. It was nearly matched in terms of quality with 92 percent of careers staff reporting their relationship with students was *good*.

The next relationship most frequently rated *vital* was with *Deans* which drew 85 percent of staff responses. It was matched with 83 percent of teachers indicating this relationship was *good*. This is likely to be a reflection of the point at which *deans* and careers staff can work together. *Deans* have important student wellbeing responsibilities and act as a point of contact with parents. It is easy to see how they would have a useful role in assisting careers staff to gain access to students at either year level, in target groups, or for individual consultations. A good relationship with *deans* may also help careers staff be more effective in seeing a greater number of students in addition to arranging or organising larger scale careers-related events for whole year levels or the entire school.

Careers staff rated *principals* highly both in terms of their importance to their work (*vital* = 83 percent) and the quality of the relationship (*good* = 80 percent). In addition to their overall leadership role, *principals* clearly also have overall strategic planning and financial importance in terms of careers education.

While those ranked most highly both in terms of importance and quality by careers staff are relatively unsurprising, there was an interesting trend for individuals and groups within the school to be considered more important to careers staff than groups external to the school. For example, the majority of relationships rated *vital* by 70 percent or more of respondents were groups or individuals within the school such as *students*, *deans*, *the principal*, *other teachers*, *HODs*, and *guidance counsellors*. The exception to this trend was *local/regional tertiary representatives* which were rated *vital* by 71 percent of careers staff.

Relationships rated as *vital* by 50–69 percent of respondents included *parents of students*, *local employers*, and *ITOs (Industry Training Organisations)*. With the exception of *parents of students*, these are individuals and/or groups that have a less direct connection to schools although they are involved in careers education.

Those rated *vital* by less than half of careers staff included a range of careers-related groups external to the school, such as *Career Services consultants*, *careers teachers at nearby schools/kura*, *Tertiary Education Commission*, *Youth Transitions Service*, and *MOE Regional Office*. Although the latter three of this group in particular play a more peripheral role in careers education, it is interesting that less than half of responding careers staff rated any of this group as *vital*. We also note that while *School Support Services* has generally been less likely to be involved in careers education, it does now have a central role in supporting the implementation of CPaBL in the 100 schools not involved in this questionnaire.

School differences

Careers staff from composite schools were significantly more likely to report relationships with *HODs* as *vital*. Interestingly, this was not the case in secondary schools with careers staff more frequently (87 percent) rating *deans* as *vital* to their job than *HODs* (68 percent). Further evidence of the role *deans* play in the provision of careers education was seen with respondents from larger schools (rolls upwards of 751 students) being statistically significantly more likely to rate their relationship with school *deans* as *vital* to their job. It seems that in situations where careers staff are dealing with a large student population, *deans* play an extremely important role, most likely in assisting with access to individual students and larger groups (target groups and/or entire year levels). Careers staff from medium- and high-decile schools were significantly more likely to report *good* quality relationships with parents compared to their peers at low-decile schools who were more likely to report *poor* or *satisfactory* relationships.

There were several other nonsignificant decile-related trends. Careers staff from low- and medium-decile schools reported better quality relationships with *ITOs*. More careers staff from low- and medium-decile schools rated the importance of their relationships with *local employers* as *vital* than high-decile school staff. More careers staff from high-decile schools than low or medium-decile schools rated the importance of relationships with *local/regional tertiary representatives* as *vital*.

There were several nonsignificant patterns relating to school size and the importance and quality of relationships. Careers advisors/transition teachers from larger schools (500 students plus) were more likely to have *good* relationships with: *other careers teachers* in the school, *other careers teachers* at nearby schools, and *HODs*. This is consistent with staff from larger schools more likely to report conferences and professional development (where interaction with other careers staff is most likely) as useful sources of ideas (see Careers staff and principal perspectives on careers education section).

Planning and decision making

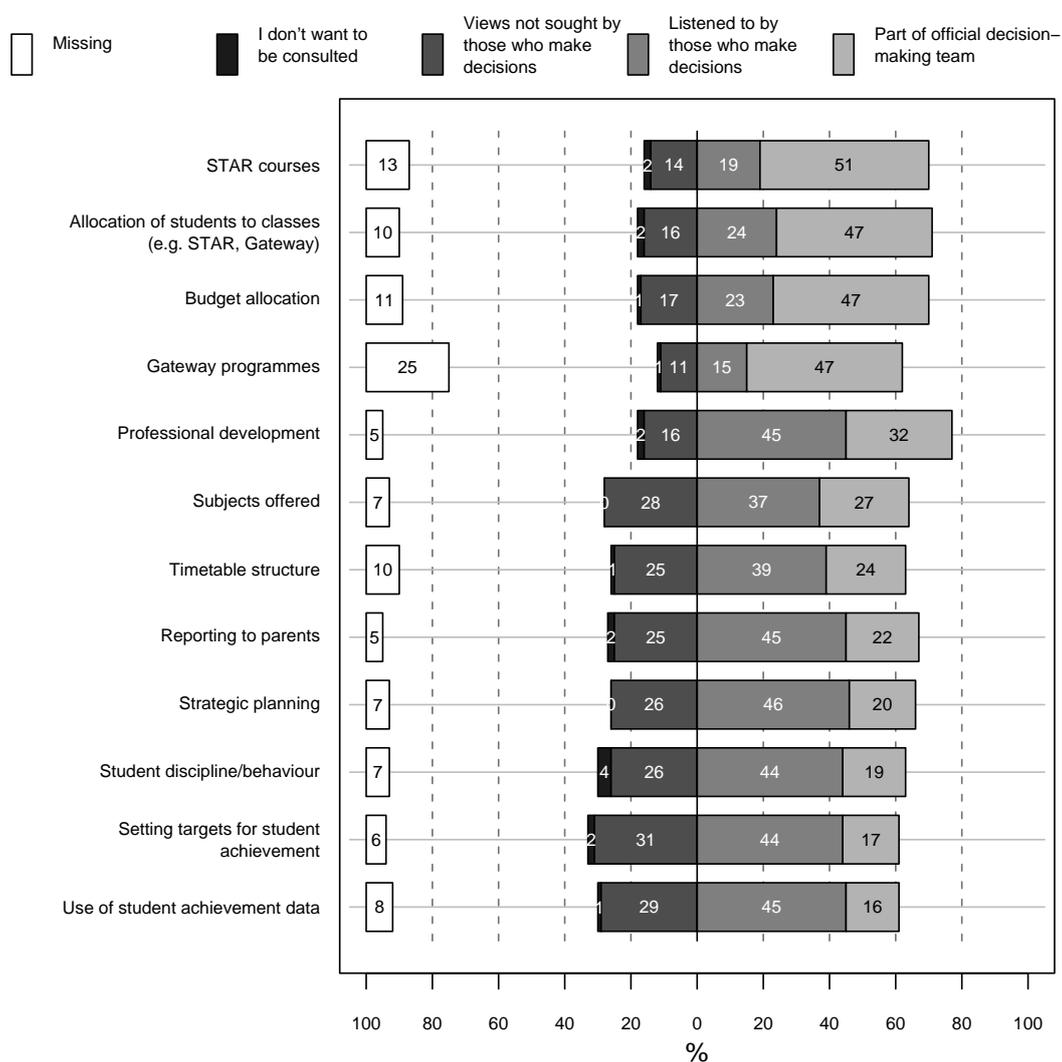
Overall, careers staff had a high level of involvement in many aspects of school planning and decision-making. Given that 35 percent of our respondents identified themselves as a careers team leader and held a management role, it is perhaps not surprising that so many were involved in careers and school-wide decision making.

The four items that displayed the most involvement by careers teachers/advisors in decision making were *STAR courses*, *allocation of students to classes*, *budget allocation*, and *Gateway programmes*. In these items nearly half of respondents were *part of the official decision-making team* (47–51 percent). Another fifth (15–24 percent) were *listened to by those who make decisions*. A smaller proportion (11–17 percent) of respondents reported that their *views were not sought by those who make decisions*. These four items also drew the highest proportions of

missing data (10–25 percent) although this can be explained by two items, *STAR courses* and *Gateway programmes*, which are not offered in all schools.

Responses to the remaining items show fewer career staff involved in the official decision-making team being matched with an increase in the number that are *listened to by those who make decisions*. While it is positive to see a high proportion of careers staff involved in decision-making, either through being part of the official decision-making team or being consulted, in 7 of the 12 items it is clear there is a substantial number of careers staff who are *not* actively involved in planning and decision making. Between a quarter and nearly a third (25–31 percent) of careers staff reported that their views were not sought by those who make decisions.

Figure 12 **Involvement in decision making**



School differences

Careers staff from composite schools were significantly more likely to be part of the decision-making team for timetable structure, setting targets for student achievement, professional

development, and reporting to parents. In addition, across the remaining items/areas, there was a clear (though nonsignificant) trend for these teachers to be part of the decision-making team. There was a similar nonsignificant trend for careers staff from smaller schools (rolls less than 300 students) to be part of the decision-making team across all items. It seems likely that careers staff in these schools hold additional roles/responsibilities that involve them in decision making.

In a nonsignificant trend, careers staff from low-decile schools were more likely to be involved in decision-making for *Gateway* (reflecting their greater level of involvement with it), *strategic planning*, *setting targets for student achievement*, *use of student data*, *allocation of students to classes*, and *student discipline and behaviour*. They were also statistically significantly more likely to be part of the decision-making team in relation to professional development, whereas their peers from medium- and high-decile schools were more likely to be *listened to by those who make decisions*.

More decision making?

After indicating the areas and the extent to which they were involved in school decision making, we asked participants to indicate whether there were any areas where they felt they should be more involved in decisions than they currently were. While nearly half (48 percent) reported wanting no other involvement, just under a third (32 percent) indicated there were areas they would like to be more involved, with a further 14 percent being *unsure*. Of those who wanted more involvement, the most frequently mentioned areas were *subjects offered/choice* (40 percent), *funding* (28 percent), *STAR/Gateway* (18 percent), and *timetabling* (18 percent).

Careers education policy in the school

Careers policy status

Most careers staff reported their schools having a clear careers education policy and one that is reviewed regularly. In addition, it appears that in most cases the policy is a standalone one (solely about careers) and reflects school or kura charter and/or annual planning and reporting targets.

The following Likert graph shows that more than half of careers staff (59 percent) indicated their school had a career education policy with clear purposes. A further 18 percent reported that the school was currently developing this. In a similar pattern, just under half (56 percent) of participants reported that the school's career policy was reviewed regularly, with another 13 percent reporting that the school was currently developing this process.

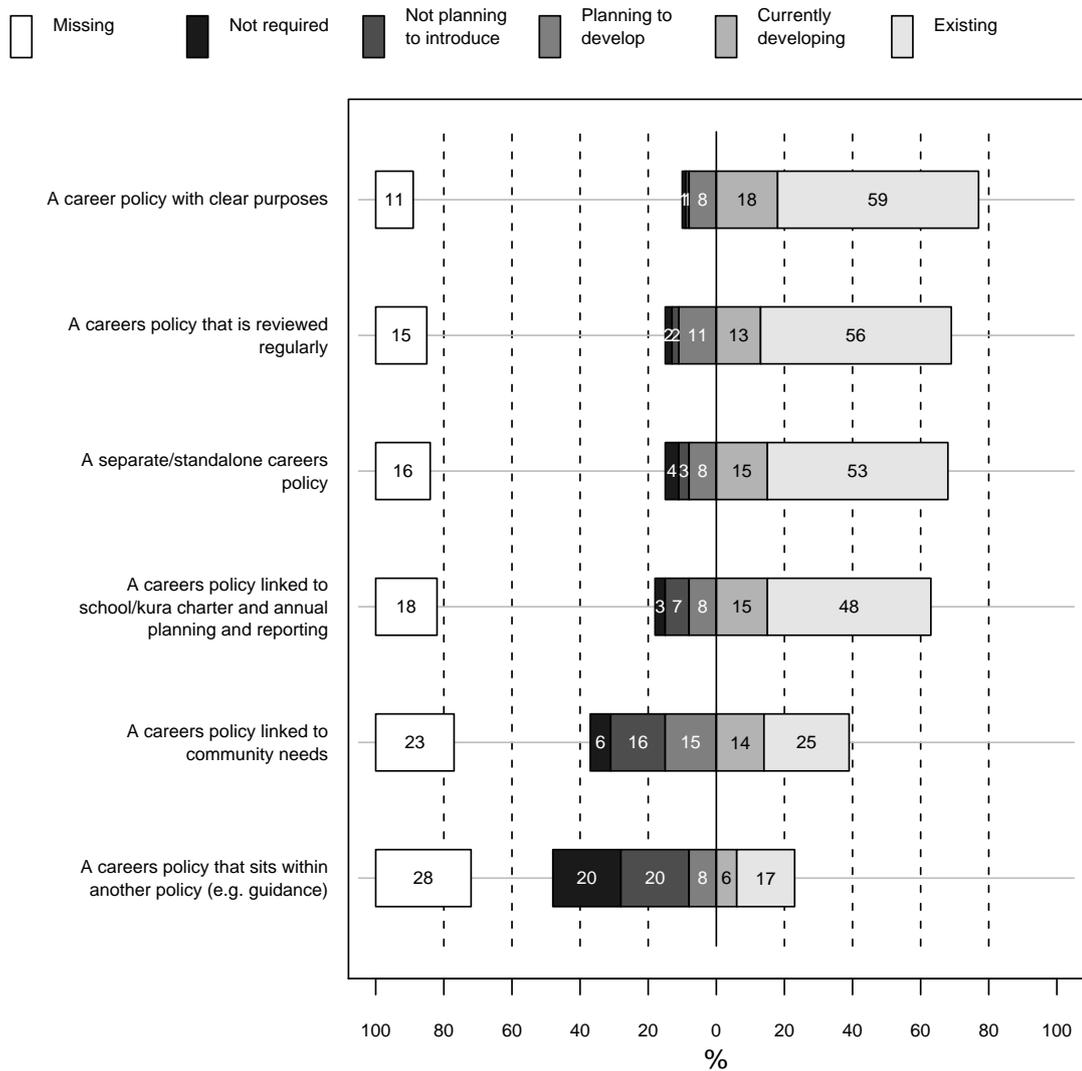
Sixty-eight percent of respondents replied that a separate/standalone careers policy either existed at the school (53 percent), or was currently being developed (15 percent). Nearly half of respondents (46 percent) indicated that the careers policy was linked to the school's/kura's charter

and annual planning and reporting, with a further 23 percent either currently developing this or planning to.

Only a quarter of respondents saw the school's existing careers policy as being linked to the community's needs although 14 percent of participants advised this was currently in development, with a further 15 percent planning to develop it. Few schools (17 percent) had an existing *careers policy embedded within another school policy*. Forty percent of respondents to this item advised the school was not planning to introduce this (20 percent) or considered it was not required (20 percent). Both of these items had a larger number of missing responses than the previous items with approximately a quarter of participants choosing not to answer the question.

High-decile schools were significantly more likely to have an existing *careers policy linked to community needs* than low- or medium-decile schools. Small schools (roll less than 300 students) were significantly less likely to have an existing careers policy with clear purposes compared to larger schools. There was also a (nonsignificant) trend for small schools to have fewer existing policies relating to careers education than larger schools. As with some of the other trends for composite and small schools in these questionnaire findings, this is probably related to a greater degree of flexibility and informality in these schools.

Figure 13 **Careers policy in the school**



Noncareers policies referring to careers

We also asked participants to indicate which, if any, noncareers school policies and procedures referred explicitly to careers education. The following table shows that the two most frequently mentioned policies and procedures dealt with very specific aspects of careers education provision—*reporting and communication of careers-related information* (61 percent) and *documented links with employers, ITOs, tertiary providers* (60 percent). The latter is likely to provide careers staff and the school with information about careers contacts in the community, as well as any collaboration between the school and tertiary providers or employers—something which would be particularly important for schools looking for job or workplace learning placements for students or schools which put an emphasis on meeting community needs through their careers programme. This is also consistent with data we reported earlier in this section where most careers staff (72 percent) rated local tertiary representatives as *vital* to their work (local employers and ITOs were not rated quite as highly, with 52–58 percent *vital*).

The third and fourth most frequently selected items relate to strategic planning and school processes such as self-reviews. The remaining items reflect areas where careers-related information and/or processes either inform other actions (such as student profiling and tracking) or are required for school administration (budgets).

Table 9 **Explicit school policies and procedures for career education**

Policies and procedures	No. of responses (n=201)	%
Reporting and communication of careers-related information	123	61
Documented links with employers, ITOs, tertiary providers	119	59
School/kura strategic plan, school/kura annual plan, self-review	109	54
Strategic planning and programme development to meet student needs at each year level	108	54
Identification processes for students in target groups	100	50
Guidance and pastoral care	99	49
Student profiling and tracking	97	48
Departmental budget information	91	45
Transition	90	45
Management (HR, designated responsibilities etc.)	82	41
Staffing and professional development	73	36
Assessment and record-keeping procedures	59	29
Learning support/special educational needs	58	29
Equal opportunities, Treaty of Waitangi	46	23
Management documents for other subjects	37	18
Information technology (school/kura policy for use of ICT)	36	17
Other	2	1
Don't know	17	9

* Responses total is more than respondents total due to multiple responses.

Career Information Grant spending decisions

Overall, principals and careers staff were more likely to *lead spending decisions* or be *partially involved* than senior management or the board of trustees, who tended to be *consulted* or *informed only*.

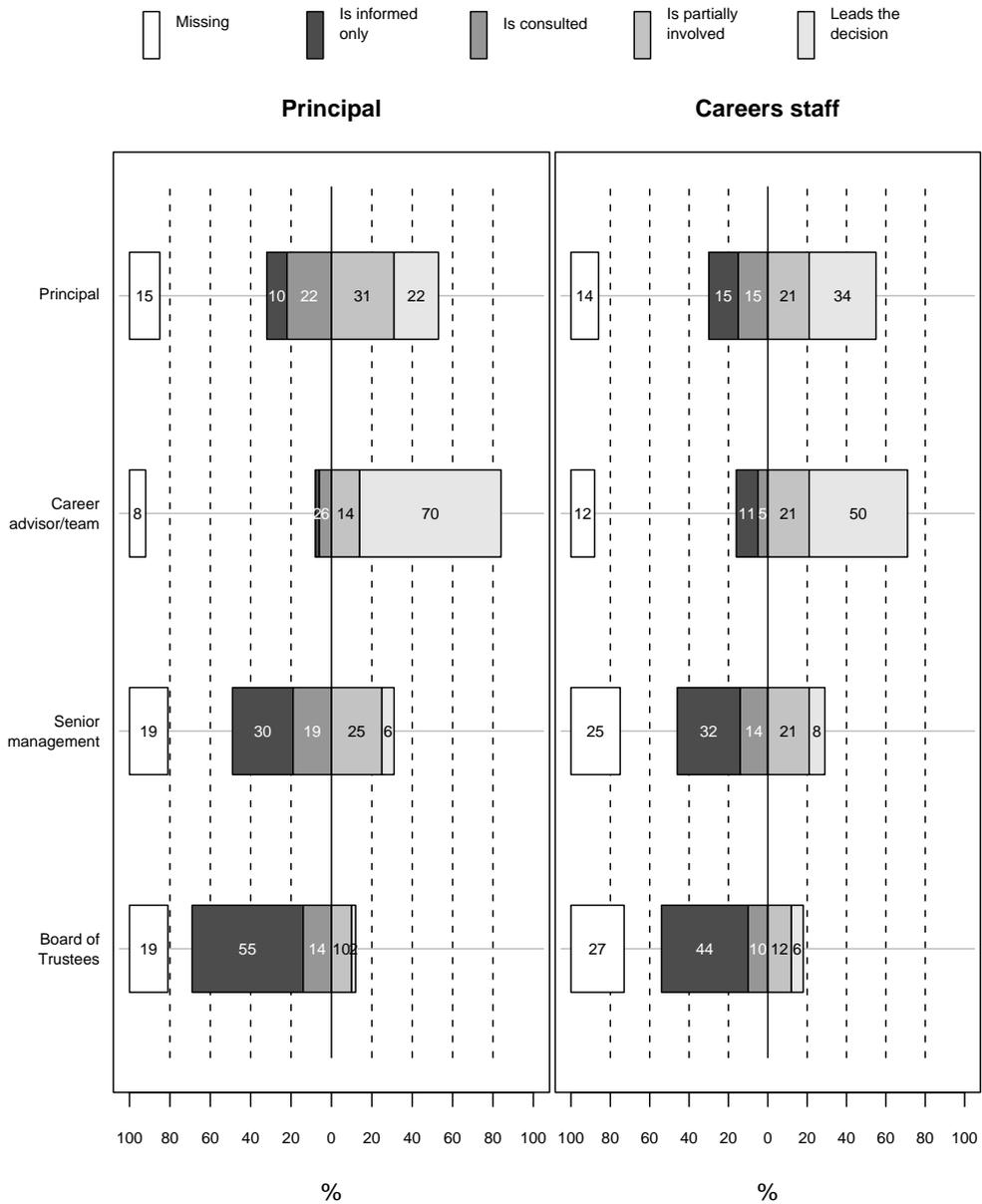
There was generally close agreement between principals and careers staff about the role that senior management and the board of trustees played in decision making. However, there was variation in how principals and careers staff perceived each other's involvement in this process.

Principals were more likely to indicate they were *partially involved* (31 percent) than *leading the decision* (22 percent). Careers staff saw it the other way around, reporting that they saw the principal *leading the decision* (34 percent) rather than being *partially involved* (21 percent). Given principals' leadership role within the school it is likely that careers staff perceive any level of involvement in decision making from them as guiding or influencing decisions. Principals may have underestimated the level of impact they have in these processes. It is also possible that since the CIG is provided to schools as a "nontagged" part of the Operations Grant (giving school leadership complete discretion regarding its expenditure), careers staff may consider the principal to have more scope to direct the use of funds compared to careers "tagged" funds within the Operations Grant such as STAR.

Both principals and careers staff indicated that senior management within the school tended to either be *partially involved* (principals 25 percent, careers staff 21 percent) or *informed only* (principals and careers staff 32 percent). Similarly, both groups advised that the most frequent role the board of trustees played was being *informed only* (principals 55 percent, careers staff 44 percent).

The following figure compares responses from principals and careers staff on the issue of who is involved in the spending of the school's Careers and Information Grant (CIG).

Figure 14 **Principal and careers staff perceptions of CIG decisions**



There was a nonsignificant pattern in careers staff perceptions on the role of the principal in CIG spending. Careers staff from larger schools (rolls over 500) were more likely to see the principal as *leading decision making*. In comparison, careers staff at small and medium schools tended to consider the principal to be *partially involved* in such spending decisions. In principals' own eyes, on the other hand, their level of involvement in spending the CIG was more likely to be one of *leading the decision making* at low-decile schools. In addition, there was a trend for more principals at low-decile schools to consider the board of trustees to be *partially involved* in decision making about CIG spending than at medium- or high-decile schools, where they tended to be *informed only*.

In another nonsignificant trend, principals at smaller schools (rolls under 499) indicated that the board of trustees was *partially involved* or *consulted* in regards to CIG spending. This likely reflects the increased level of involvement that trustees are likely to have in smaller schools. This trend was supported by responses from careers staff at smaller schools who also indicated that the board of trustees had a similar role in the spending of the CIG funding.

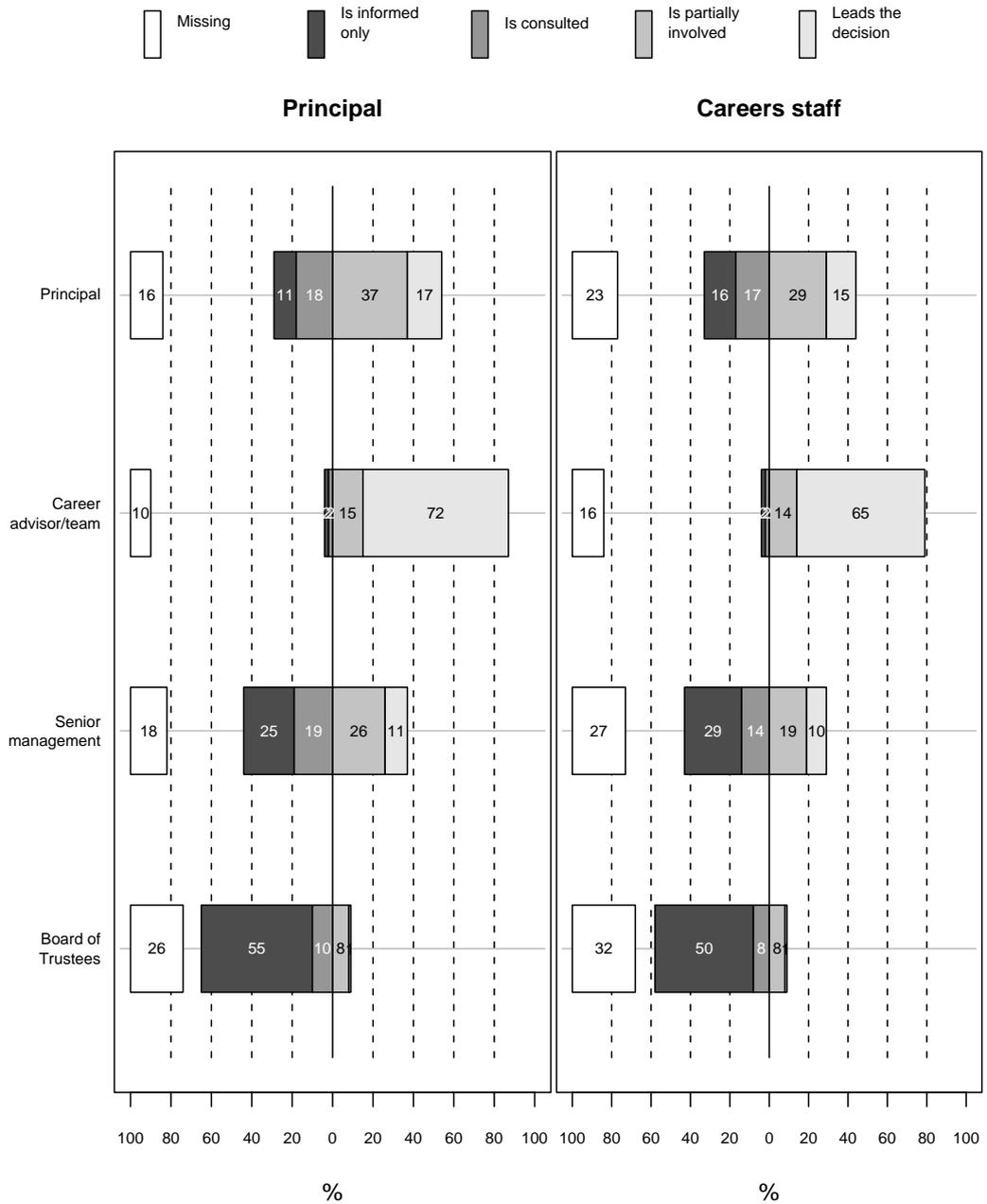
STAR funding decisions

We also compared responses from principals and careers staff on the issue of who is involved in spending schools' STAR grants. Overall there was a greater level of agreement between principals and careers staff about their respective involvement in the spending of the STAR grant than with CIG. This may have something to do with the fact that STAR funding is “tagged” for use in careers education whereas CIG is not and that there are designated STAR co-ordinators and a clear reporting regime involving the Ministry of Education.

Principals and careers staff *agreed* that in most cases (65–72 percent), careers staff (in which we include the STAR co-ordinator) *lead decision making*. While similar proportions of careers staff and principals thought that principals were *leading decision making* (15–17 percent), a larger number considered they were more often *partially involved* (principals 37 percent, careers staff 29 percent). The “tagged” nature of STAR funding is also likely to explain the reduced level of input from principals in comparison to CIG spending.

Both groups saw similar roles for senior management and the board of trustees in STAR spending decision making. Senior management were most frequently considered to be *partially involved* or *informed only* while the board of trustees was frequently reported as being *informed only*.

Figure 15 STAR funding decisions



Facilities for careers education

Space

Nearly all careers staff (92 percent) reported having *storage and display* areas for careers. However, only around half (54 percent) considered them *adequate or more than adequate*. Over a third (37 percent) considered these *less than adequate*, while 6 percent indicated they *did not have this facility* yet and wanted it. This perhaps highlights the important role of providing information

to students, in this case through prominent display areas with sufficient room to store a variety of careers-related material (brochures etc.).

Careers staff were asked to comment on the *size and space* of the school's careers area. More than half (60 percent) considered that space to be *adequate* or *more than adequate*. Just over a quarter of responses (27 percent) indicated that the facilities were *less than adequate*. Ten percent reported that their school did not have a careers area but that they wanted one.

There was a statistically significant pattern in the relationships between school size and the rating of the size and space for careers facilities. The larger the school the more likely careers staff were to rate careers space as *adequate* or *more than adequate*. Staff from smaller schools were significantly more likely to consider the *location* and *size and space* of the careers area to be *less than adequate* or that they *do not have this and want it*.

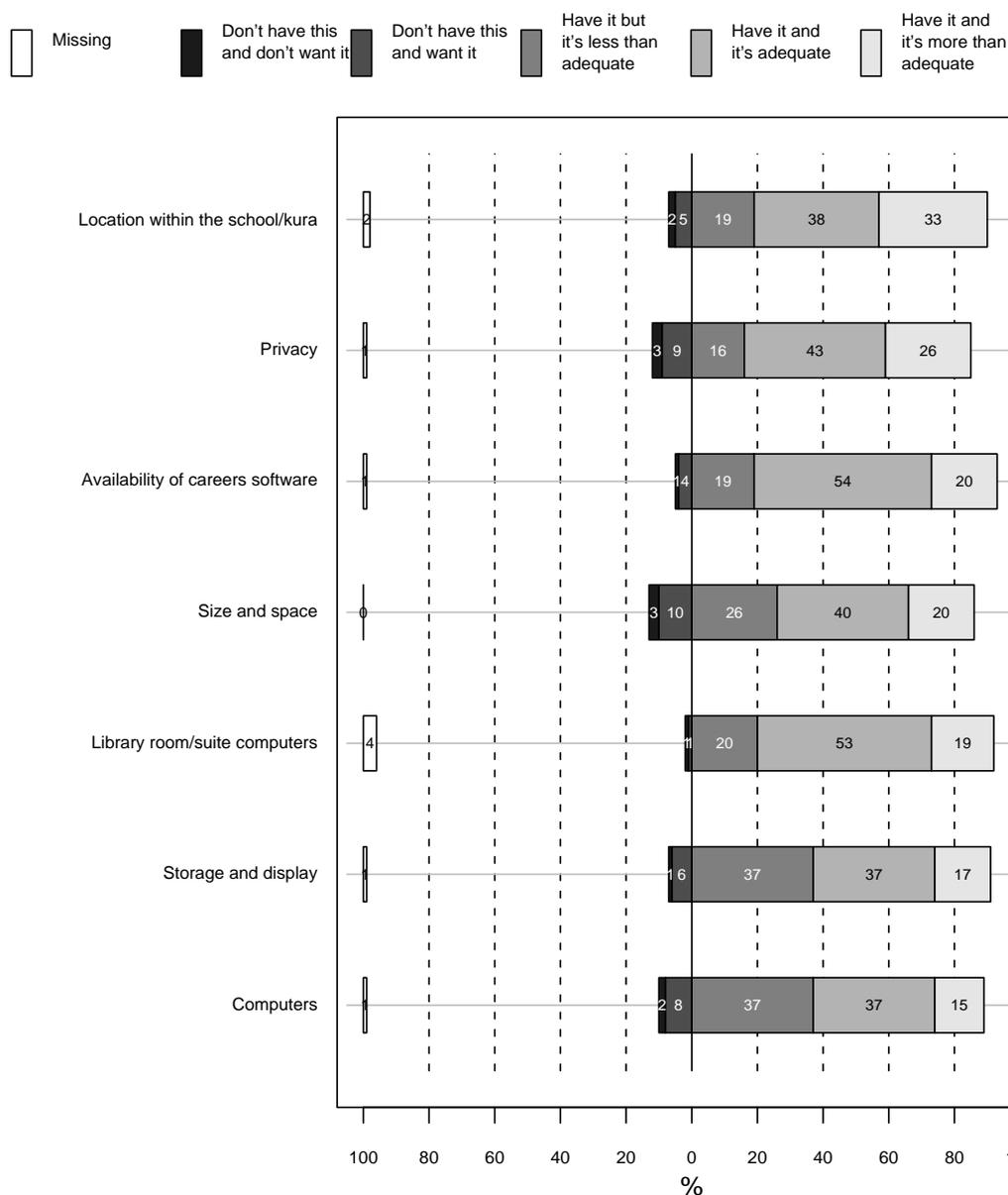
Eighty-five percent of participants reported that the careers area had *privacy*, with 69 percent considering it to be *adequate* or *more than adequate*. Less than a fifth (16 percent) thought the *privacy* in the careers area was *less than adequate*. Nine percent answered that there was no privacy in the careers area yet it was desired.

There was a statistically nonsignificant trend for lower-decile schools to report *less than adequate* levels of *privacy* or that they did not have it yet it was desired. This is probably related to the identified trend in low-decile responses to the position and quality of the careers areas' location within the school. Another clear pattern saw participants from smaller schools (less than 499 students) report *less than adequate* levels of *privacy* or that they *did not have it yet it was desired* compared to careers staff from larger schools.

These differences are likely due to smaller schools having proportionately less physical space overall than larger schools. As such, allocating a classroom or administration area to careers education in a larger school is less likely to impact on available teaching areas than in smaller schools. There is also the likelihood that larger student numbers and the associated increase in careers staff necessitate a larger area such as seen in bigger schools.

Most respondents (90 percent) indicated that careers education had a particular *location at the school* with nearly three-quarters (71 percent) considering it *adequate* or *more than adequate*. Nearly one-fifth (19 percent) felt the location was *less than adequate* but only 5 percent of respondents reported that careers education did not have a set location and that they wanted one. There was a trend for lower decile schools to report such facilities to be *less than adequate* or that they *did not have them* though they wanted them. Respondents from larger schools (500 students or more) were statistically significantly more likely to consider the careers area location to be *adequate* or *more than adequate* than their peers from smaller schools.

Figure 16 **Facilities for careers education**



Computer and careers software access

Nearly all (97 percent) respondents had access to a *computer room/suite* with 76 percent considering the resource to be *adequate* or *more than adequate* and 21 percent finding it *less than adequate*.

Ninety-two percent of respondents indicated that careers had access to *library computers* at the school with 72 percent considering it to be *adequate* or *more than adequate*. A fifth (20 percent) of respondents saw their access as *less than adequate*.

Most (89 percent) respondents indicated *computers* were available for careers education, however, only half (52 percent) saw them as *adequate* or *more than adequate*. Thirty-seven percent

considered this resource to be *less than adequate* and 8 percent indicated they *did not have this facility yet and wanted it*.

Ninety-four percent of participants indicated *careers software* was available at the school with 74 percent finding it to be *adequate* or *more than adequate*. A fifth (20 percent) considered access to such software as *less than adequate*.

Responses indicated a statistically nonsignificant trend for high-decile schools to be more likely to report the availability of *careers software* as *adequate* or *more than adequate*. We did not see this trend in the previous responses related to computer access, suggesting that expenditure for careers-specific ICT material (rather than computers that can be used across all subjects) is impacted by school decile.

6. Work and achievements in careers education

Overview

This section covers careers staff responses to questionnaire statements about workload and satisfaction, achievements in careers education, changes in aspects of work, barriers to providing careers education, and judgement of impact in relation to careers and transition.

Careers staff were very clear that they enjoy what they do, despite dissatisfaction with aspects of their work and working conditions. The areas of most dissatisfaction, biggest (negative) change in workload, and the biggest barriers to providing careers education were related to lack of time. Careers staff were consistent in highlighting the difficulties in trying to work face-to-face or individually with students and manage the different parts of their workload, especially where these involved building and maintaining relationships. They perceived a lack of career progression in their role but recognised an availability of professional development opportunities and had significant achievements related to their own upskilling. They also had significant achievements in relation to the most immediate post-school, measurable outcomes such as *students get jobs* and *students enter tertiary programmes*. Overwhelmingly, judgement of impact involved nondocumented personal experience, except in relation to formal programmes such as STAR and Gateway, where documentation was favoured.

Workload and satisfaction

We asked career staff to rate their level of agreement with a series of different positively worded statements about workload and satisfaction. We customised the workload and satisfaction statements used in NZCER's National Survey of Secondary Schools in order to provide an interesting point of comparison between careers staff and secondary school teachers.

Perhaps the single most outstanding feature of careers staff responses was their resounding level of enjoyment of their career role. Nearly every respondent cited agreement with the statement *I enjoy my careers/transition role* and almost three-quarters (72 percent) *strongly agreed* with this statement. This was in fact the only statement to receive almost total agreement, making it stand out from all the other responses to statements about workload and satisfaction. It also stood out in

a comparison with teachers responding to the NZCER National Survey, where only just over a third (36 percent) reported *strongly agreeing* with the statement *I enjoy my job*.

Careers staff were also positive in their responses to several general statements about their working environment. Almost a third (29 percent) *strongly agreed* that *careers/transition staff are well respected in this school/kura* and another 39 percent *agreed* with this. In a similar vein, over a quarter (27 percent) *strongly agreed* that *I get the support I need to do my careers job effectively* and a further 43 percent *agreed*. Careers staff seemed slightly more positive about feeling supported than general teaching staff responding to the NZCER National Survey, where only 18 percent *strongly agreed* that they were *well treated*, and a further 45 percent *agreed*.

The message coming through here is interesting because responses to other statements show that careers staff are not necessarily happy about other critical conditions of their employment and workload. Only 8 percent *strongly agreed* and just 21 percent *agreed* that *there is career progression available to me in my role*. This was also the statement about which careers staff felt most equivocal: almost a third were *neutral/unsure* on this point (32 percent), suggesting that career pathways, along with increased challenge, responsibility, and recognition, may not be clearly articulated to, or understood by, many careers staff.

We are aware that not everyone wants or expects “progression” in their job, and we did not specifically ask about whether careers staff sought or desired this. However, it does seem reasonable to assume career progression might be available, or that people might at least have knowledge about availability, given that most careers staff are also members of the teaching profession. Yet over a third (35 percent) of careers staff responding were clear that career progression was *not* available to them, with nearly a quarter (23 percent) *disagreeing* that it was available and a further 12 percent *strongly disagreeing* that it was available. By comparison, while less than a third (29 percent) of careers staff expressed agreement that career progression was available, almost half of teachers responding to NZCER’s National Survey (46 percent) could agree that career progression was available to them.

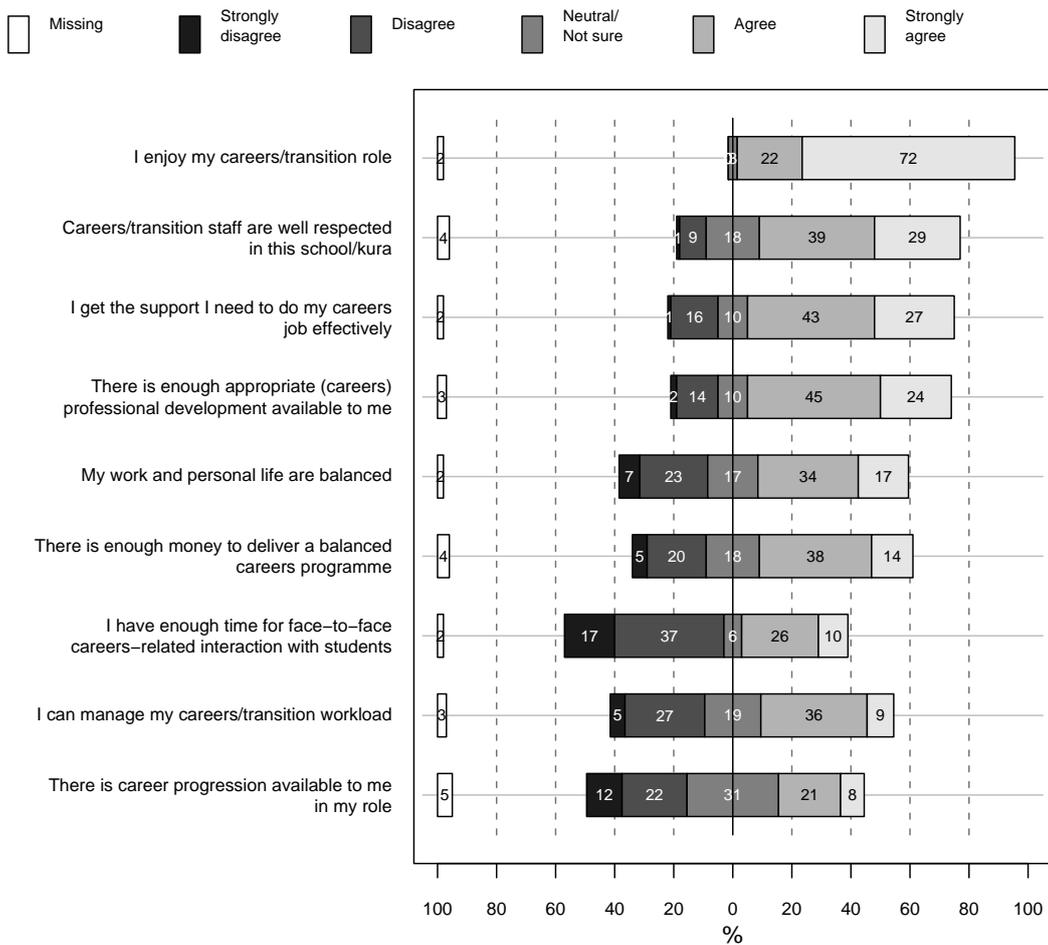
Reading careers staff *career progression* responses alongside responses to *there is enough appropriate (careers) professional development available to me* suggests that the career progression issue is more about a lack of opportunity than a lack of knowledge or understanding about possible pathways. Compared with just under a third of careers staff (29 percent) agreeing with available *career progression*, just over two-thirds of careers staff (69 percent) expressed agreement at having *enough appropriate professional development available* (24 percent *strongly agreed* and 45 percent *agreed*). This underscores that staff in careers and transition positions are likely to have specific upskilling opportunities related to better performing their role or learning to use new resources rather than formal recognised progression or promotional opportunities to develop their roles and capacities.

Careers staff indicated two other areas of major dissatisfaction. More than half (54 percent) expressed disagreement with the statement *I have enough time for face-to-face careers-related interaction with students*. Over a third (37 percent) *disagreed* with the statement they had enough

time and a further 17 percent *strongly disagreed*. Careers staff were also decisive in their responses to this statement; nearly everyone took a position of agreement or disagreement and just 6 percent were *unsure/neutral*. Given that relationships with students are seen as vital by nearly all careers staff (see Careers education within the school context section) and that one-to-one work with students is a major activity (see Careers education activities in schools section), not having enough face-to-face time is probably a major source of frustration for careers staff. Attempting to carry out this part of the job may also be a large part of why over a quarter of careers staff *disagreed* that *I can manage my careers/transition workload* (27 percent) and a further 5 percent *strongly disagreed*. That disagreement was more marked than in the NZCER National Survey where only 16 percent *disagreed*, and 4 percent *strongly disagreed* with a statement about managing workload.

Finally, there was a reasonably high level of agreement that *there is enough money to deliver a balanced careers programme*, with 15 percent *strongly agreeing* and over a third *agreeing* (38 percent). However, the spread of responses was wide, with a further 19 percent *neutral/unsure* and a quarter not agreeing this was the case (20 percent *disagreed* and 5 percent *strongly disagreed*), suggesting that schools experience things quite differently.

Figure 17 **Careers staff perceptions of workload and satisfaction**



School differences

There were several statistically significant differences according to school size. Staff from smaller schools were more likely to express disagreement about the support available to them and staff from larger schools were more likely to express agreement that they have enough support.

Staff from very small schools were the most likely to *disagree* with *getting support to do my job effectively* (30 percent) compared with staff from small schools (18 percent), middle-sized schools (20 percent), large schools (14 percent), and very large schools (3 percent). They were also the most likely to *strongly disagree* that their *work and personal life are balanced* (26 percent compared with between 2 percent and 11 percent of staff from other schools). Their overall disagreement that their *work and personal life are balanced* (*strongly disagree* plus *disagree*) was also the greatest at nearly half of the staff (45 percent), compared with nearly a third of small schools staff (32 percent), 27 percent of middle-sized school staff, 31 percent of large school staff, and 19 percent of very large school staff.

The smaller the size of the school, the more likely their careers staff were to express disagreement that they *could manage their workload*. Almost half of very small school staff (45 percent) and small school staff (42 percent) *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* with the statement about *managing workload*, compared with just under a third of large school staff (32 percent) and a quarter of very large school staff (25 percent).

There was also a (nonsignificant) trend for staff at low-decile schools to express less agreement and more disagreement with statements about managing workload and having enough resources more than staff at high-decile schools. Statements where this was the case included: *there is enough time for one-to-one interaction with students*; *there is enough funding to deliver a balanced careers education programme*; *career progression is available to me in my role*; and *I can manage my workload*.

Disagreement about the latter particularly stood out, with over a quarter of low-decile school staff *disagreeing* (27 percent) and almost a third *strongly disagreeing* (30 percent). More than a third were *neutral/unsure* about managing their workload (38 percent). In contrast, teacher responses to an identical question in the 2006 National Survey of Secondary Schools indicated that 21 percent were *neutral/unsure* about *managing their workload* while 16 percent *disagreed* and 4 percent *strongly disagreed*. While a greater proportion of careers staff than national survey teachers *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that they could *manage their workload* (57 percent compared to 20 percent), careers staff were also more likely to report they were *neutral/unsure* (38 percent) than national survey teachers (21 percent). Given that the majority of careers staff hold two or more roles within the school (see Careers staff and their roles section), answering this question might have been difficult if they were unable to separate their careers workload from their other responsibilities.

Changes in aspects of careers work

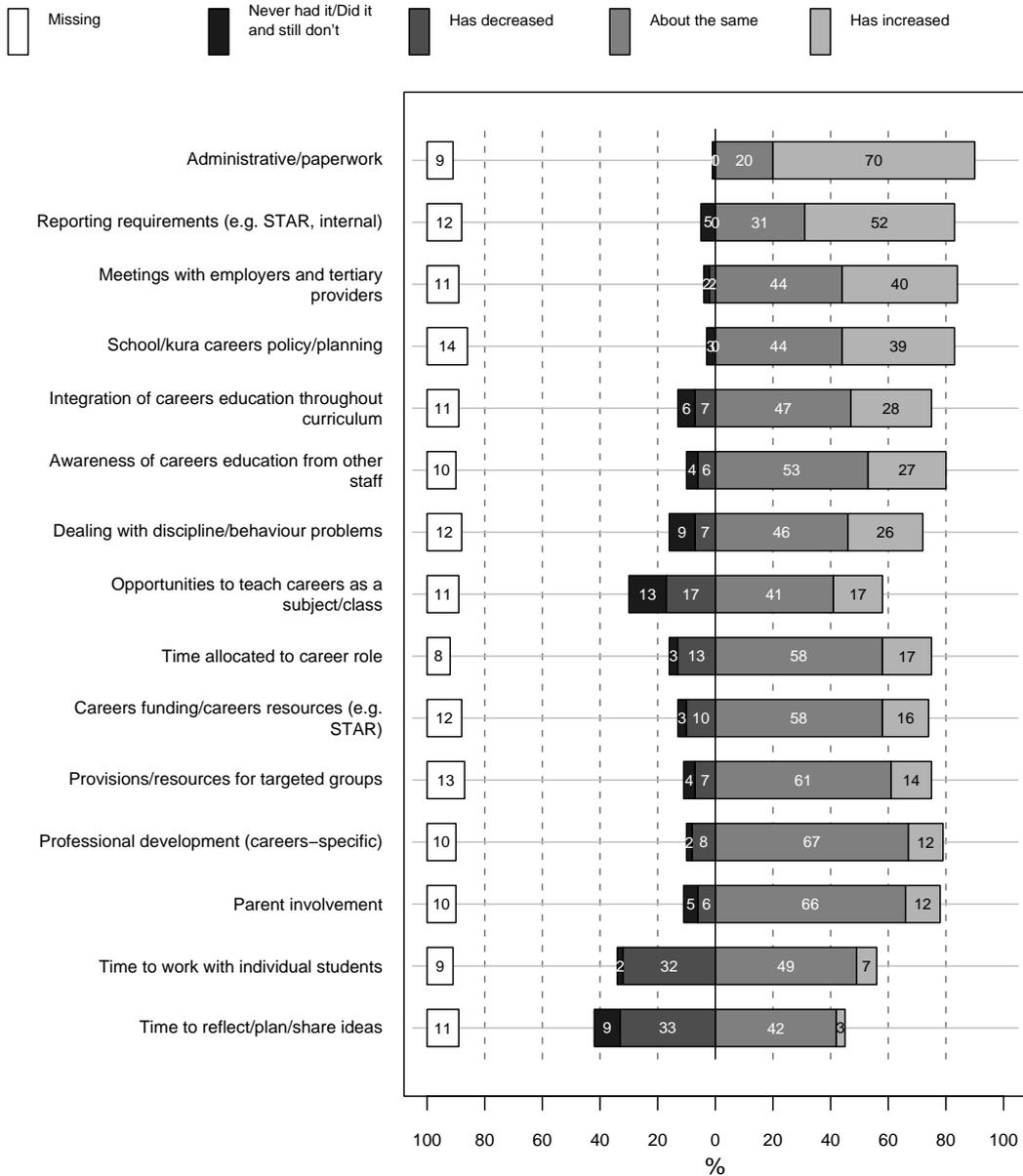
Arguably the scope of careers education and demands on careers staff have been increasing in the past few years with the emphasis on improved youth transitions and initiatives such as Designing Careers and CPaBL. We were interested in changes in careers staff's work so we asked about increases and decreases in the amounts of various aspects of their work. There is no measure of the amount or degree to which they work at these aspects currently. However, asking about increases and decreases does indicate certain trends which can be followed up through a case study of schools such as that proposed in the School Communities strand of the new EEL project.

The overall trend in responses to statements about change in work was that things were *about the same* except in a few specific areas where those citing an increase outnumbered the rest. The aspects of work where staff reported the greatest increases are administrative. More than two-thirds cited an increase in *administration/paperwork* (70 percent) and over half cited an increase in *reporting requirements* (e.g. STAR, internal) (52 percent). Sizeable proportions of staff also reported that *meetings with employers and tertiary providers* (40 percent) and *school/kura careers planning* (39 percent) had *increased*, although similar proportions of staff thought things were *about the same* in these cases.

Three areas stood out for the high proportion of staff citing a *decrease* in work, compared with the very low proportions citing decreases elsewhere (up to 10 percent). Around a third of careers staff reported a *decrease* in *time to work with individual students* (33 percent) and *time to reflect/plan/share ideas* (32 percent). While slightly greater proportions of staff thought these areas had remained *about the same* (49 percent and 42 percent), almost no-one thought there had been an *increase* in this.

There were several areas where around half or more of staff thought things had remained about the same: *parent involvement* (66 percent); *professional development* (67 percent); *time allocated to careers* (58 percent); *careers funding/resources* (58 percent); *provisions/resources for targeted groups* (61 percent); *integration of careers education throughout the curriculum* (47 percent). Perhaps somewhat worryingly, just over a quarter of staff cited an increase in *dealing with behaviour/discipline problems* (26 percent).

Figure 18 **Perceptions of change in work**



There was a fairly high nonresponse rate across all statements (8–14 percent). It is interesting to flesh out the picture in relation to several statements by reading the *nonresponses* alongside the *never had it/did it and still don't* responses. For example, *opportunities to teach careers as a subject/class* produced the *never had it/did it and still don't* response from 13 percent and a *nonresponse* from 11 percent. It is likely that this means almost a quarter of careers staff (24 percent) do not do this or do not have the opportunity to do this so cannot cite any change in work here. By reading the 9 percent *never had it/did it and still don't* responses with the 11 percent *nonresponses* to *time to reflect/plan/share ideas*, a picture emerges that suggests a fifth of careers staff did not see this statement as a reflection of what they do and therefore were unable to comment.

Barriers to the provision of careers education

Almost three-quarters of careers staff (71 percent) reported that there were barriers to the provision of careers education at their school. We asked respondents to specify what these barriers were and, of a possible 15 barriers listed, most people ticked between two and six barriers. The six barriers picked out by more than 20 percent of staff are shown in the following table.

The top three barriers, *lack of time*, *national curriculum requirements squeezing out careers education*, and *staffing levels*, were all related to time pressures. The first two affected around half of all careers staff. The only barrier directly related to resourcing cited by more than 20 percent of staff was *lack of money*. However, it seems that the biggest (perceived or actual) barriers, and the barriers most cited by staff, are related to time and to relationships rather than money or material resources. There are two possible interpretations here. Firstly, not selecting money as the major barrier could be consistent with responses in the previous subsections on workload and satisfaction, where more than half of careers staff reported agreement that *there is enough money to deliver a balanced careers programme* but disagreement in relation to *managing workload*. The second interpretation is that careers staff might be thinking of money in a very direct way in terms of buying materials or improving building space, rather than thinking of money in terms of the time that more of it could buy (e.g., extra staff).

If we read the “top six” barriers together with responses to other parts of the questionnaire (reported later in the subsections on Main achievements and Judging impact as a career advisor/transition teacher, and in the Careers education within the school context section), we can see a consistent highlighting of relationships or commitments that seem particularly challenging to set up or negotiate such as those with parents and those with the community—generally or with specific organisations within the community (e.g., industry groups).

Table 10 **Barriers cited by 20 percent or more staff**

Barrier	Careers staff (n=201) %
Lack of time	57
National curriculum requirements or assessment squeeze our careers education	47
Staffing levels	32
Lack of interest from teachers	30
Lack of money	26
Hard to get community involvement	21

There was a general trend to perceive barriers more, the lower the school decile grouping, and to perceive barriers less, the higher the decile grouping. The following barriers fitted this trend: *student behaviour or disengagement*; *parent expectations*; *staffing levels*; *lack of money*; *school’s location*; *lack of interest from teachers*; *lack of support from senior management*; and *lack of*

relevant careers PD. Low-decile schools were also (nonsignificantly) more likely to cite *hard to get community involvement* (46 percent) than mid-decile schools (23 percent) or high-decile schools (6 percent).

There were also two statistically significant differences between low-decile and high-decile school staff. Although only 14 percent of staff overall cited *lack of relevant careers professional development* as a barrier, low-decile school staff were the most likely to cite this (32 percent) over mid-decile staff (17 percent) and no high-decile school staff cited this as a barrier. Similarly, only 15 percent of staff overall cited *student behaviour or disengagement* as a barrier. However, low-decile staff were most likely to cite it (23 percent) in comparison with 19 percent of mid-decile staff and just 2 percent of high-decile staff.

Main achievements

We asked careers staff to cite their most significant achievements over the past two years from a list of possible achievements related to their job(s) (they also had the option to add other achievements to the list although none did). Overall, careers staff painted a positive picture, with over a third reporting that they had made a *significant* or *highly significant* achievement in relation to every statement of possible achievement provided.

The two achievements most regarded as *highly significant* were both related to careers staff's own capacities: *increase in my own knowledge/skills* (28 percent); and *raised awareness of the importance of careers education* (19 percent). These statements also had high ratings for *highly significant* and *significant* put together at 70 percent and 58 percent respectively. This is consistent with perceptions reported in relation to the current careers education climate (see Careers staff and principal perspectives on careers education section) where more than three-quarters of careers staff reported *strongly agreeing* or *agreeing* that *increased awareness of the importance of careers education is placing demands on my time/skills* (79 percent) and that *my role has been increasing in status within the school/kura over the last few years* (55 percent).

Staff were also positive about statements related to several measurable student-related outcomes. Sixty-one percent cited *highly significant* or *significant* achievements for *students enter tertiary learning programmes* and 52 percent cited *highly significant* or *significant* achievements for *students get jobs*.

However, it is notable that less than 20 percent of careers staff could cite any (bar one) of the achievements as *highly significant*, although around a third cited *significant* achievements in relation to nearly every other statement. Perhaps even more interesting is that 20 percent of staff also gave *nonresponses* or *not significant* responses to nearly every statement giving a very wide range of responses across all statements. Overall, this wide range in responses is likely to reflect the wide range of careers education purposes and the wide range of different schools, community contexts, priorities, and challenges.

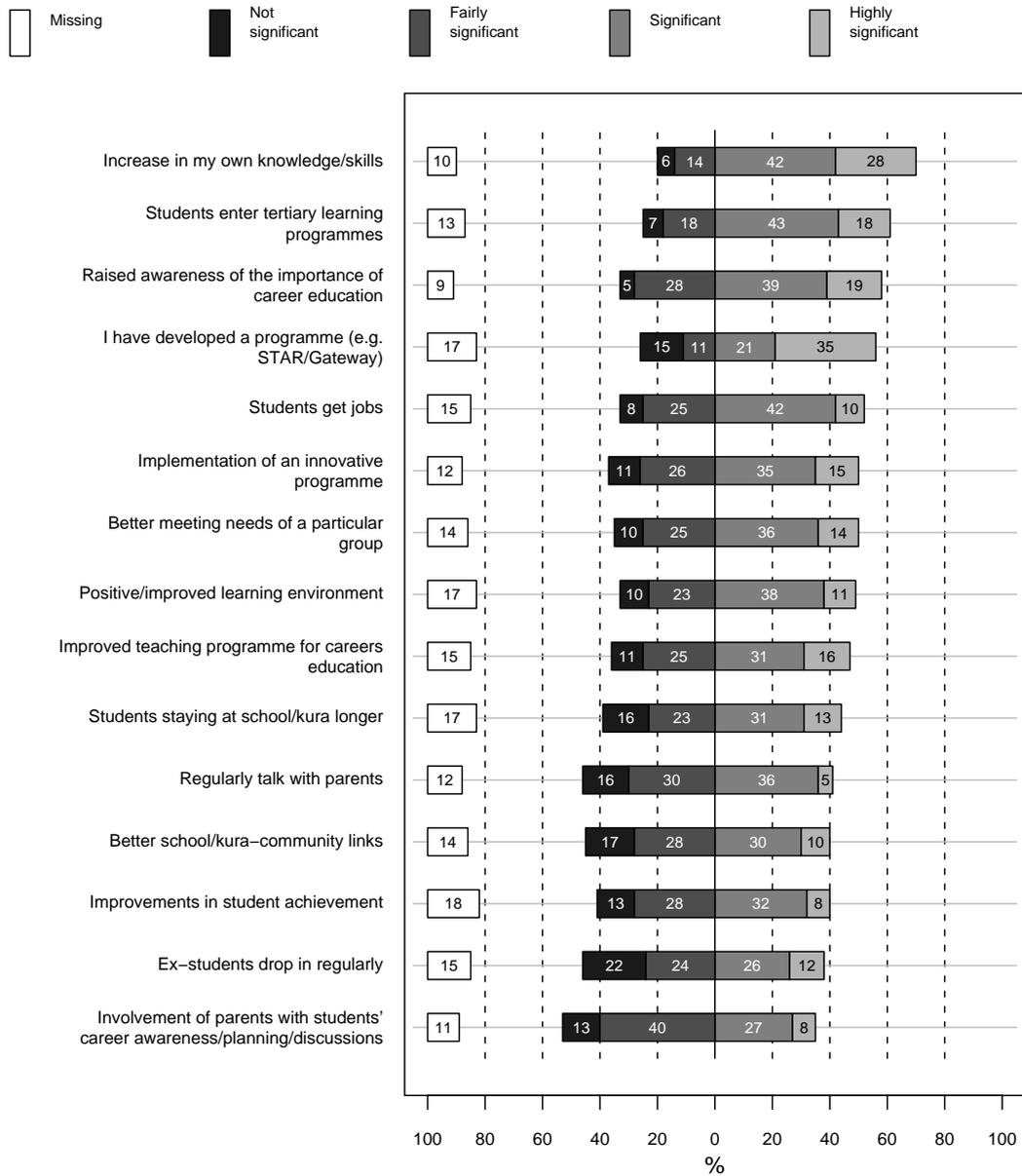
It is interesting to consider the nuances in staff responses, particularly in relation to *nonresponses* and *not significant* responses. For example, the particularly high *nonresponse* rates in relation to *improvements in students' achievement* (18 percent), *students staying at school/kura longer* (17 percent), and *positive/improved learning environment* (17 percent) suggest that staff may not be able to say whether they had any achievements or not if these were not priorities in their careers or transition role. Another 10–13 percent of staff reported that their achievements here were *not significant*, suggesting that these might have been goals but either nothing much happened or that nothing could be shown or measured here. In the case of *ex-students drop in regularly*, there was a greater proportion of *not significant* responses (22 percent) than *nonresponses*, suggesting that staff could pinpoint that this happened but did not regard it as much of an achievement.

The statement *I have developed a programme (e.g. STAR, Gateway)* had a particularly high *nonresponse* rate of 17 percent but this is likely to be because Gateway is not offered in all the schools in our sample. However, where STAR and/or Gateway are offered, things seem to be working really well because it was the only area where more than a third of staff (35 percent) reported *highly significant* achievements. The fact that low-decile schools were statistically more likely to rate *developing a programme* as *highly significant* (64 percent) than mid-decile schools (36 percent) or high-decile schools (21 percent) may also reflect low-decile schools' greater levels of involvement with the Gateway programme. The wide spread of responses in relation to this statement may also reflect different school-specific situations in relation between STAR and Gateway and possibly also other programmes not readily identified or demarcated as careers-related.

Low-decile schools were slightly more likely to rate *students staying at school/kura longer* as *highly significant* (24 percent) than mid-decile schools (10 percent) or high-decile schools (11 percent), echoing the trends in previous sections of this report.

While staff from schools of all sizes were more likely than not to consider *raised awareness of the importance of careers education* and *implementation of an innovative programme (e.g. STAR, Gateway)* to be *significant* or *highly significant*, staff from the very large schools were more likely to consider these *highly significant* rather than just *significant* (42 percent compared with an average of 19 percent across the sizes for *raised awareness*, and 26 percent compared with an average of 16 percent across the sizes for *innovative programmes*). Staff at very small schools were the most likely to consider *students staying at school/kura longer* to be a *highly significant* achievement (37 percent) compared with staff from other school sizes (an average of 13 percent across the sizes).

Figure 19 **Careers staff perceptions of their main achievements**



Judging impact as a career advisor/transition teacher

We asked respondents how they judged their impact as careers advisors, transition teachers, and co-ordinators in terms of recording through experience, personal documentation, and/or documentation as part of the school's data collection process.

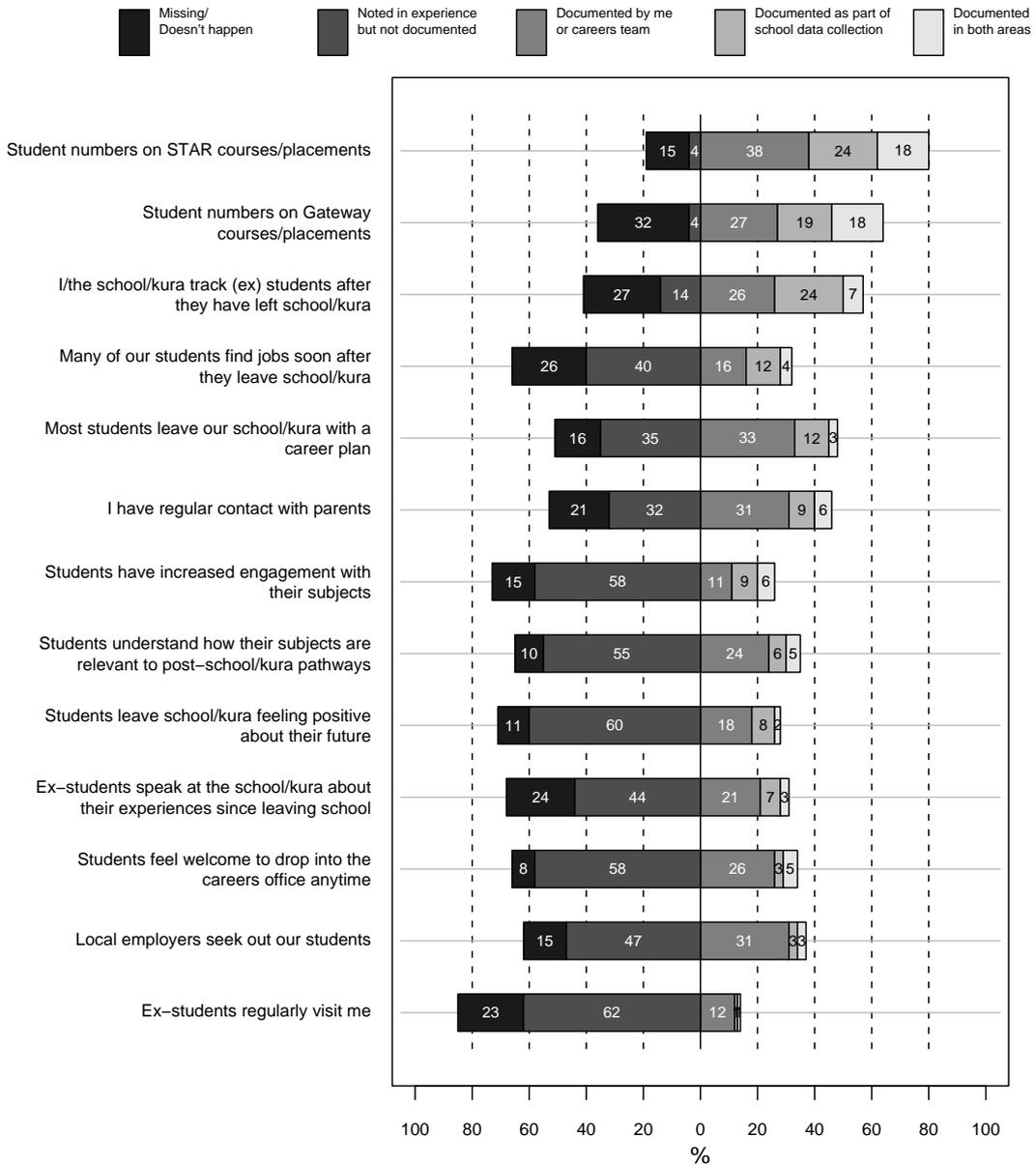
The three items most frequently documented by careers staff, the school, or both were *student numbers on STAR courses/placements*, *student numbers on Gateway courses/placements*, and *I/the school/kura track students after they have left school/kura*. The first two were programmes that receive specific funding from the Government and have a formal, built-in documentation

requirement. So it is not surprising that STAR and Gateway were most frequently tracked by both careers staff and the school (18 percent).

Other items that resulted in documentation by careers teacher/advisor, the school, or both seem to involve the production of a document by either the student or careers teacher/advisor such as a careers plan, or a student tracking database or similar record. However, for most of the items, careers teachers/advisors judged their impact through their personal experience. These items may not easily lend themselves to documentation as they tend to deal with relationships and connections between careers staff, students, and the wider community.

We combined the *missing* and *doesn't happen* responses in the following figure as these are instances where no documentation or personal noting of any kind takes place. There were six areas where a fifth to over a quarter of staff reported this situation. In the case of *student numbers on Gateway courses/placements*, the 32 percent *missing/doesn't happen* group is highly likely to represent staff at schools that do not run Gateway. However, in other cases such as *I/the school track (ex)students after they have left school/kura, I have regular contact with parents, and many of our students "at risk" of unemployment find jobs*, documentation or noting is probably very difficult because the situations require so much flexibility or ad hoc responsiveness on the part of the careers staff. In other cases such as *ex-students regularly visit me* and *ex-students speak at the school*, documentation or noting may not be considered very important.

Figure 20 **Judgement of your impact**



School differences in response patterns

There was a marked difference between careers staff in composite and secondary schools in relation to statements about judging impact. Overall, careers staff at composite schools tended to judge their impact from their experiences and were significantly more likely to note in their experience *regular contact with parents*, *many students at risk of unemployment find jobs after leaving school/kura*, and *most students leave school/kura with a career plan*. In contrast, careers staff at secondary schools tended to judge their impact through documented evidence. They were significantly more likely to document that *most students leave school/kura with a career plan* and *student numbers on Gateway courses/programmes* (we note that composite schools are not eligible for Gateway).

These different forms of judging impact are likely reflections of some fundamental differences between composite schools and secondary schools. Students at composite schools have often attended since junior age and belong to smaller communities which can allow strong relationships to develop. It may be quite efficient or manageable for careers staff in composite schools to maintain systems involving students, and relationships with other staff and the community, through informal means. Secondary schools, on the other hand, are on the whole larger, both in terms of student numbers and community size. Careers staff may be unable (but not necessarily unwilling!) to develop such strong ties with the majority of students, and informal systems would be unmanageable in relation to strategic planning and reporting requirements.

Those school authority differences in response are likely to be linked to the school size differences which also emerged here. Careers staff in smaller schools were far more likely (through a mix of trends and significant items) to rely on personal experience to judge impact and careers staff in larger schools were more likely to judge impact through documentation.

Careers staff in larger schools (500 students plus) were significantly more likely than their peers at smaller schools to judge their impact through personal documentation of *contact with parents*, *tracking students*, *the number of students at risk of unemployment getting a job*, *number of students leaving with a career plan*, and *local employers seek out our students*.

Careers teachers/advisors in smaller schools (499 students and less) were significantly more likely to judge their impact through personal experience of *tracking students* and *most students leave school with a careers plan*. This fitted with other nonsignificant trends where careers staff also judged their impact through their experiences. This is likely to be a reflection of the underlying differences in approaches seen between small and large schools. Larger schools are more likely to require formal systems/programmes and the related documentation to manage careers education for a large number of students. Since our smaller school categories also include most of the composite schools, which have fewer senior year level students than secondary schools, it is not surprising that there are such similar response trends within school authority and school size categories.

7. Conclusion

Nothing in particular
and everything in between
This is what you mean to me
Only you and only me
Climbing in the right direction
On the way to everything (Colvin, 1996)

Shawn Colvin's lyrics sprang to mind while thinking about how to conclude this report. It seems to sum up what we have been thinking as we moved from anecdotal evidence about school-based careers education provision to the analysis of the data in this report. Firstly, we think that careers staff and principals are deeply committed to an idea of careers education and to meeting the needs of individual students and target groups of students. Secondly, we suspect that individual careers staff are likely to be able to articulate what they think careers education is about. But as a collective, through the data analysed here, careers staff seem hard pressed to articulate what careers education is about in terms of its immediate priorities.

Perhaps this is to be expected. After all, we are talking about a big concept. For many people today, "careers" and "education" encompasses much more than just school and jobs. If you understand "career" in its broadest sense, it does mean thinking about "life" and some of the other big ideas currently being explored in New Zealand that would seem to affect, well, everyone really: a knowledge society; a flexible and skilled workforce; achieving work/life balance; and practising lifelong learning. No wonder careers education seems to be about so much on the one hand and be so lacking in focus on the other.

So perhaps the way forward is a re-examination of NAG 1.6 and the specification that schools must:

provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students in year 7 and above, with a particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Is this guideline still relevant, still fit for purpose? Too narrow, too broad? If we re-examine NAG 1.6 we should do it alongside the Ministry of Education's (2003) publication *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* which spells out the aims of "career education and guidance":

for individual students to develop self awareness, become aware of opportunities, make decisions and plans, take action (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 7).

Going by careers staff and principal responses to these ideas in the questionnaire section on the purposes of careers education, nobody really disagrees with these ideas. But it is interesting and important to note that not everyone answering the questionnaire *strongly agreed* with these ideas; many just *agreed*.

The weighting of agreement with different purposes was very telling, with the biggest majority of careers staff *strongly agreeing* with perhaps the most passive of all the purposes: *providing information, or access to it, for all students*. Only around half of careers staff *strongly agreed* with *helping students develop self-awareness* and only about a third *strongly agreed* with *teaching students decision-making strategies*—two clear aims spelt out in *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools*. Where is this apparent disconnection coming from?

Careers staff are purposeful in the range of activities they undertake with individual students, target groups, and year level groups. However, many of these activities are built upon theories about vocational guidance and models career-related to age-and-stage that are passing their use-by date. NAG 1.6 refers to preparing for “the transition to the workplace *or* further education/training” (our emphasis) but it might do better to refer to preparing for “the workplace *and* further education/training”. In other words, careers education is not just about providing information about options and encouraging participation in tertiary learning or the workforce; it is about fostering individual progression and development (Watts, 2001) and crucially encouraging *participation as learner-workers* and engaging students with the “production” of their careers (Vaughan & Roberts, 2007).

Our analysis shows that careers staff are enormously committed to their jobs and very happy doing them. Like most teachers, they would probably say they became involved because they wanted to make a difference to the lives of young people. However, while careers staff highly value professional development (especially the practical and just-in-time), they do not appear to value qualifications (the theoretical grounding in what they do)—and perhaps with some reason since careers education is one of many roles they perform in the school. Several years ago the former president of CATE pointed to the insatiable demands of the job, calling “don’t shoot the careers advisor” over workforce imbalances (such as the shortage of trades people) while imbalances in marketing muscle between universities and trades organisations, and some inconsistencies in careers education policy existed (Thomson, 2005). Not surprisingly, our analysis shows that careers staff do not think their work has not changed much in the past two years and do not see their own careers changing much in the next five, yet they also recognise that they face new challenges as the broad context of careers education, and associated policy demands, is changing around them.

We have seen the success of well-focused and well-supported initiatives like STAR and Gateway. Now we have the CPaBL initiative which supports schools to take a school-wide approach to careers education. We still need to further understand and develop the careers education focus but

a school-wide approach is a great start. Without this focus, we risk leaving teachers dealing with “school stuff” and careers staff at the margins, managing an ever-increasing deluge of information (and advertising) and different in-school and out-of-school relationships, while trying to help students link up life, the universe, and everything. The analysis in this report shows that we have a strong basis for building the careers education field within schools and there are clear indications for what the ongoing priority needs to be—an understanding of career *development* and career *management* in relation to career *guidance* and how these can work together to provide careers *education*.

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